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CHRISTMAS SONG.

From belfry, towers, and tapering spires
The drifted dark bright cherubs clear,
And bend to hear the chanting choirs
Greet the great day of all the year.

And all the mellow Christmas bells
Clash their wild tunes upon the air,
And, gathering in melodious swells,
Wake the white echoes every where.

Around the fane the incense wreathes,
The organ rolls, the anthem rings;
Through the dim aisles all Heaven breathes
To lift the soul from mortal things.

To lift the soul, the sense upbuoy,
And meet the level of the morn,
When, breaking all the gloom to joy,
The Saviour of the world was born.

STEAMBOAT DISASTER ON THE OHIO RIVER.

Even in a year which has furnished so full a record of disasters by land and water it is difficult to find a story more painful than that of the recent collision of the two steamboats *United States* and *America*, on the Ohio River.

The accident took place on the night of December 4, a little after eleven o'clock. The *United States*, a splendid three-decker, was descending the river to Louisville. Just opposite Rayl's Landing, one mile above Warsaw, Kentucky, she collided with the *America*, which was ascending the river. The *United States* was sunk, but not before she was enveloped in flames, which were instantly communicated to the other steamer. Both vessels were destroyed in less than five minutes. The fire was caused by the collision, which forced a number of barrels of petroleum that were on the guards of the *United States* into the furnace; at least this is the statement made by Mr. Andrew Harrigan, second clerk on that vessel. The cargo on both steamers was of a very inflammable material—consisting of brooms, whisky, cotton, bacon, etc. To this circumstance the speedy destruction of both vessels is to be attributed. The catastrophe was sudden, and there was an immense loss of life, mainly, however, on the *United States*, which lost 35 out of 65 passengers.

Captain R. M. Wade, who makes this statement, says that it was a dark but not a foggy night. "The *America*," he reports, "went into the *States* on the larboard, abreast of the baggage-room, and only cut through the guards and a few of the top timbers of the hull. The flames appeared to come instantaneously with the crash on both boats—shooting up above the top of the hurricane-roof of the *States*, where I was standing. The wind was blowing hard up stream. The *States* backed into the Indiana shore, where her head swung quartering out into the stream, going down in a few seconds. The *America* blew two whistles, which was answered by the *States* by one whistle, or it was all I could hear, owing to the high wind. The *States* blew again, but we could not hear the *America's* reply." After the collision the boats appear to have been separated for a brief interval, but, according to the second clerk's statement, came together again, and a number of passengers were saved by jumping on board the *America*. This clerk says there were 75 passengers on board the *United States*, and that of this number 25 were ladies. "There were," he says, "two bridal parties on the boat, and some of the passengers thought they would have a little fun in serenading them, which they did, and some twenty minutes after the serenade the collision occurred; and I think if it was not for the serenade the bridal parties would have been lost; but as they were in their state-rooms awake, they were apprised of the danger in which they were, and got off the *United States* on to the *America*; and as their state-rooms were on the same side as the *America* they were saved. The scene in the cabin at the time was indescribable. Several ladies stood throwing their children overboard and crying for assistance. Upon the guards a number of ladies stood, wringing their hands and crying for help, but they would not leave the place they were in, and perished in the flames. Previous to the disaster we were enjoying ourselves in the cabin dancing, and the passengers had just entered their state-rooms."

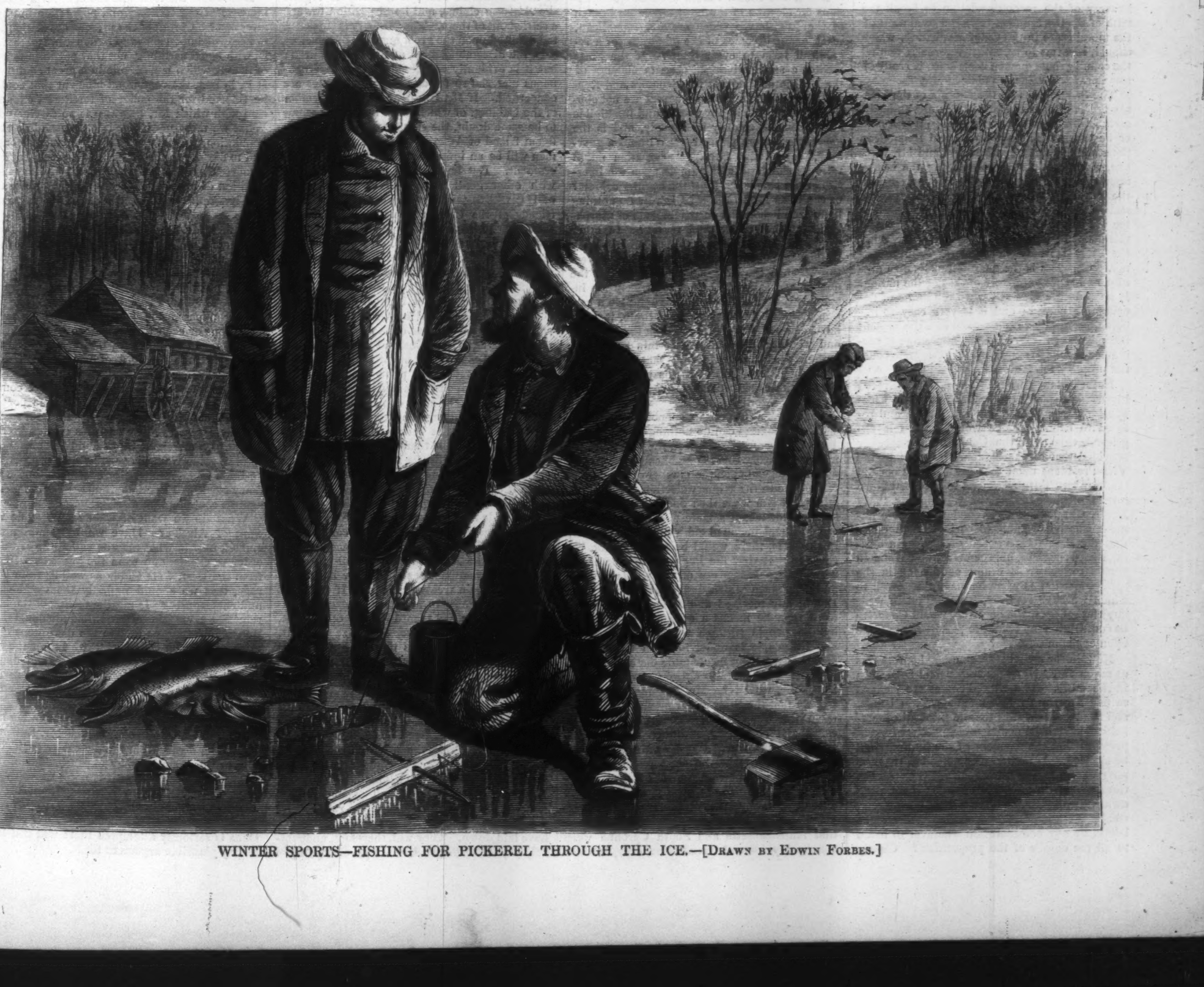
The panic occasioned on board both vessels was beyond description. There was no time to dress, and some of the ladies in their attempts to escape the raging flames lost even their night-clothes. Ole Bull, the celebrated violinist, was one of the passengers on the *America*. He escaped by wading to the shore with his violin. Many other passengers on this vessel owe their escape to the efforts of the clerk, C. W. Taylor, who burst open the doors of their state-rooms and dragged them out of their beds. In some cases ladies who were attempting to escape by means of floating shutters were ruthlessly hurled from their refuge by men.

The people of Warsaw deserve most grateful mention for their efforts to alleviate the sufferings and to supply the temporary wants of the distressed victims of this disaster.

THE LETTER-CARRIERS' NEW COSTUME.

The New York City Post-office employs 308 mail-carriers. On the 25th instant these officers are to be clad in uniform—a cadet-gray coat and pants, with black trimming, and a marine cap with a badge bearing the mail-carrier's number.

The average number of letters distributed by a single mail-carrier is from 233 to 250 per day, including papers and parcels. In the month of September last there were distributed in this way over the city 1,312,766 letters; 537,099 drop-letters; 212,352 papers; and from the mail-boxes the carriers collected 2,877,646 letters. There are eight distributions per day in the lower part of the city, and nine in the upper part. In the course of a year a single letter-carrier is intrusted with the delivery of upward of 90,000 letters and papers. It is an occupation which demands from these officers the promptest attention and the most scrupulous care, besides industrious tramping in all sorts of weather. The advantages arising from their new livery are numerous, and so obvious that it is unnecessary to particularize.



WINTER SPORTS—FISHING FOR PICKEREL THROUGH THE ICE.—[Drawn by Edwin Forbes.]

HARPER'S WEEKLY.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1868.

THE LAST OF THE PRESIDENT.

THE President's Message was so emphatically laid upon the table that it is now probably forgotten except as an insult, not so much to Congress as to common honesty and common-sense. In obedience to the requirements of the Constitution, the President recommended certain measures which he considered necessary to the public welfare. The first of them was a proposition that the people of the country should proceed to say that they did not mean what they had just declared at the election and after the fullest discussion; and the second was, that the Government should cheat its creditors. The comedy of the first suggestion for the public welfare is sobered by the unmitigated knavery of the second.

Looking at this Message, with its sullen spirit and its base proposals, the country can imagine what the national situation would have now been had HORATIO SEYMOUR been elected. The absurdities and criminalities of the Message would have been the declared policy of the Government. The reconstruction acts would have been doomed, and the late rebel States would consequently have been plunged into anarchy. The honor of the United States would have been irrevocably tarnished, and the nation that emerged victorious from a struggle of arms would have succumbed to hopeless demoralization. The system of popular government would have been brought into a disgrace from which it is not possible to see when it could have recovered; and, bankrupt in good sense and common honesty, the country would have been the scorn of history.

If we had not seen a great party surrendering itself last summer to the control of baffled enemies, not only of the Union but of the principle of the Government, and proclaiming that wholesale swindling was the true financial policy for a great nation, it would be incredible that a President could send to Congress such a message as this. The blank stupidity of proposing that, after more than three years' acquaintance with the situation, after the most intelligent and repeated and conclusive verdicts against "My Policy," the country should adopt it as the sole solution of every difficulty, is explicable only upon the theory of mingled ignorance and dull, dogged obstinacy, which is more than suspected in the President. But the brisk knavery of the recommendation to break the faith of the Government reveals a total want of the moral sense in the Chief Magistrate, which should, it seems to us, rather vigorously remind the country that common conscience is really of some practical value in public affairs.

The Senate arrested the reading of the Message. The House listened to it, and immediately laid it upon the table, whence it will never be taken. There were several Republican Senators, including Mr. MORTON and Mr. WILSON, who were in favor of reading the whole, upon the ground that the Constitution requires the President to communicate to Congress the state of the country, and to submit suggestions for promoting the public welfare. But surely this does not compel Congress to hear any thing the President may choose to say in any manner. Congress is the guardian of its own dignity, and representatively of that of the nation. It must decide for itself when the limits of decency are passed; and it is very easy to imagine, especially with a person like the present incumbent of the Presidency, a message of recommendations so expressed that Congress could not properly tolerate it.

If, for instance, when Mr. JOHNSON delivered his drunken speech at his inauguration as Vice-President, the Senate had interrupted and refused to listen, no one would have felt aggrieved, even had the Constitution expressly provided that a speech should be made by the Vice-President upon that occasion. Poor old GEORGE THE THIRD was said to have sent down a royal message to Parliament beginning, "My Lords, Gentlemen, and Woodcocks." Parliament was hardly obliged to listen. Suppose that the President, instead of sending a message in writing by his secretary, had come in person to deliver it orally, and, being in the same condition as when he made the speech to which we have referred, had refused to wear any clothes upon the occasion, would Congress be constitutionally bound to permit the outrage upon common decency?

Now, in the actual case, common honesty was as much outraged as decency would have been in the other. The United States are pledged to pay a certain interest upon certain bonds, and the President says that he thinks the bondholders have been sufficiently paid already, and proposes that the payment of the interest shall be stopped. If he had recommended that the navy of the United States should seize all the foreign ships it could find, pay for them at its own valuation, then scuttle and burn them, would the Congress of the United States be bound by any consideration whatever to listen to all the details of the proposition? Clearly it is within Congressional discretion in either branch to determine when the public dignity and welfare demand the refusal to hear more of any communication whatever. As a rule, undoubtedly it will generally hear; but it is a grave consideration whether the overture from the Executive of a conspiracy to swindle the national creditor does not justify an emphatic departure from the rule.

Whatever further offenses the President may commit, it is a pleasant reflection that his opportunities of vexing the public patience are rapidly ending. Had he been removed from office when he was impeached he would have retired with a certain air of mock dignity as a martyr, and have enjoyed a kind of active hold upon a vague sympathy. But he will now leave his office not only to the satisfaction of all loyal citizens, but with the merited contempt of all honest men.

THE QUESTION OF THE SUFFRAGE.

IN considering, last week, the subject of the suffrage, we suggested that it was very difficult to see why, under the constitutional clause requiring the United States to guarantee to every State a republican form of government, and the decision of the Supreme Court that Congress has the binding power to examine the State constitutions, Congress could not legislate upon suffrage. If it can not, it is difficult to see how the guarantee can be executed, for if a State should vest all political power in a family or an oligarchy, and Congress can not touch the suffrage, a republican form of government would be overthrown in the State, and the constitutional guarantee for its defense would be wholly inoperative and useless. Indeed, as we said, the theory that the control of this vital question in a republic resides solely in the States, is the growth of the long supremacy of Southern interests and political dogmas in the government. The point is generally conceded as of course, and without reflection. But when the authority for such a view is demanded, it is usually given by quoting the constitutional provision that electors of Members of Congress "shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the Legislature." And there is no other express constitutional allusion to the subject. It is then, of course, assumed, under the general provision that the powers not delegated to the United States nor prohibited are reserved to the States respectively or to the people, that the question remains indisputably with the States.

But if the States should demand qualifications for electors of the most numerous branch of the Legislature which are not republican, what, again, becomes of the guarantee of a republican form to every State? If the State creates a small privileged class of electors of the Legislature, so that the Senators and Representatives who come to Congress are not chosen by the people in any proper and intelligible sense, has the country no remedy, and is the guarantee a mere phrase? "Without a guaranty," says Judge STORY, "usurpation might raise its standard, and trample upon the liberties of the people." Must the country submit? or can it, as HAMILTON asks, legally do nothing more than behold the encroachments of usurpation with indignation and regret? In other words, is Congress bound to look on helplessly while a republican form of government is overthrown in a State? Is it not to answer the question to ask it? Is not the conclusion inevitable that if Congress *must* guarantee a certain form of government in a State, it must have power first to determine what that form is, and whether it exists in a certain State, and authority to interfere if it finds that such a form does not exist? Without this power and authority the constitutional provision is a mere mockery of words.

Senator TRUMBULL, in supporting the theory that Congress can do nothing upon the subject of the suffrage, proposed the still more remarkable theory that a republican government does not depend upon the number of people who participate in the primary election of representatives. Upon what then does it depend? If the Senator meant a mere play upon the word republic, and included old Venice or Paraguay in the term, there would be no argument, because in that view the Papacy might be called a republic. It is a use of the words republic and republican which destroys their meaning. But in any received and American sense the word republic means a system of government by the people through their representatives, and by people is understood no class of the people based upon insuperable distinctions, but the great body of adult citizens. If this is not a republic, what is? Mr. TRUMBULL seems to assume that the State governments, recognized when the Constitution was formed, must be considered republican, although they did not allow slaves to vote. But does Mr. TRUMBULL seriously assert that the government of South Carolina, for instance, before the war was a republican government? And if so, is that the kind of government which Congress is required to guarantee to every State? Or does he mean that Massachusetts and South Carolina were equally republican? And if he does, has not the word ceased to have any meaning whatever in his mind?

Because it may be difficult to define with perfect precision what a republican form of government is, it surely does not follow that there is none. Nor because the significance of the word increases with further reflection ought sensible men or a sensible government to insist upon being bound by a more ignorant interpretation. The guarantee of a republican form is permanently imperative upon the United States. It is the duty of Congress, therefore, whenever the question arises, to answer it by its conviction at that time. With the conviction of the country to-day, undoubtedly the constitutional clause of this guarantee, and the clause apportioning representatives and direct taxes are inconsistent, because the latter recognizes a large class of persons not free, and slavery is not compatible with a republic. But that is no longer a question. There are no slaves; there are only free citizens in the country. And are not women free citizens? asks Mr. TRUMBULL. Undoubtedly; and did the Senator ever see any substantial argument against their claim to political power? Then he would undoubtedly ask in return whether, if Congress may declare government by a single man or family in any State not to be republican, it may not also declare government by a sex not to be republican? It seems, certainly, that it may do the last if it may do the first; and does Mr. TRUMBULL deny that it may do the first? If he does deny it, is it possible to show how Congress can execute the mandate of the Constitution? If it means any thing, what does it mean? Does it mean that the United States may interfere upon the requisition of the Governor of a State if a citizen tries to make himself King, but may not interfere if a majority of the electors make him King? But, in the former case, has the State less a republican form than in the latter? If the United States must guarantee a republican form, must they not decide when it is necessary to exert the authority so imposed?

There is still something to be said of the manner in which this authority may best be exercised, as well as upon the point whether, conceding the right and the authority of Congress, the result contemplated may be more wisely attained by a constitutional amendment.

THE NEW MINISTRY AND THE OLD CLAIMS.

THE immediate interest of the United States in the new British Ministry is the consideration of the manner in which it is likely to regard the *Alabama* claims, and its disposition toward a settlement of them. The Ministry is supposed to be united upon the great question of the election, the disestablishment of the Irish Church; but it is evidently composed of very heterogeneous material so far as the United States are concerned. If Mr. BRIGHT becomes a member of the Cabinet, of which there now really seems to be some doubt, the stanchest and most intelligent friend of America among English statesmen will be an influential member of the Government. But he will find himself associated with other gentlemen, such as the Marquis of HARTINGTON, who were very decidedly not friends of the United States during the war. With Lord CLARENDON as Foreign Secretary, there will be, we apprehend, no serious change in the general tone of the foreign policy of England. Lord STANLEY is too intelligent a man to suffer his hereditary Toryism to become stupid or malignant; and it must be acknowledged that the general conviction of his high character and ability has done very much to restore that respect for England which was lamentably declining under his predecessor.

Upon the preliminary point which is understood to be so urgently pressed by Mr. SEWARD, that Great Britain shall confess that she did wrong in recognizing the rebel States as belligerents, we do not believe the new Cabinet will be more flexible than the old. It will not deny the responsibility for losses which the Government conceded to be its duty to prevent when it forbade the departure of the *Alabama*. But it will probably insist that every nation must decide for itself under what circumstances it will recognize the belligerency of combatants. Should the United States decline to accept a settlement of the *Alabama* claims until the question of international custom or law is settled, there must be a treaty or a war. If we insist that the recognition was an act of open hostility, and that we will regard it in no other light, England must, of course, apologize or fight. But if England declares that such a demand upon our part necessarily renders the peaceful adjustment of questions of international law impossible, it will be rather difficult to find an answer.

As for a reference, it is only possible to refer the question of damages. Great Britain will hardly allow Prussia substantially to decide whether she has correctly interpreted the law of nations. Would the United States do it? The British Government and people unquestionably see as distinctly as we the ruinous and disastrous consequences of the principle they have laid down. They will, therefore, undoubtedly pay the damage which it has inflicted upon us, and then, surely, we may safely leave the matter as it stands. Indeed, it has sometimes seemed as if Mr. SEWARD had persisted in his demand because he knew that England would not accede to it, and that so a constant irritation would be maintained against her. We do not attribute so puerile and base a policy to the Secretary of State, but it has been suspected, and even suggested. The barbarous statesmanship of the Middle Ages might have been guilty of a wish to foster causes of international hostility; but the man who should do it to-day between England and the United States, and still claim to be a statesman, would be laughed to scorn. The duty of statesmanship to-day is not to cherish provincial and national jealousies: it is to make universal peace possible upon the most generous principles.

Mr. SEWARD is supposed not to be very friendly toward England, and he knows what we all know, that there is a certain feeling in this country that would gladly hail a difficulty or a war. It is a conviction that the account can be settled only by a blow, and there is in some otherwise sensible minds a kind of aching desire to give John Bull a shaking. But whether it would be wise and noble to take a national policy from such feelings is not a question. The war should at least have put us right in our own eyes. England knows, and we know that England knows, that we are no longer to be treated as a child, or an adventurer, but as an equal. Being sure of that upon both sides, war is wholly unnecessary.

LAND HO!

MR. CALEB CUSHING is supposed to have left the country upon some one of Secretary SEWARD's mysterious missions of buying land. The area of the United States is so small and its parts so harmonious, that the Secretary seems to be of opinion that we want a few hundreds of thousands of fresh inhabitants; and if they are Esquimaux, Spaniards, African slaves, people bred under the worst monarchy and aliens in every way to our national system and spirit, so much the better. It is also suggested that Mr. CUSHING is to act as associate Minister with Mr. REVERDY JOHNSON. But we imagine the State Department will not undertake to mend that matter at present; and it is so curiously like Mr. SEWARD to think that the Spanish revolution and the trouble in Cuba offer a proper opportunity for buying that island at a bargain, that the presumption is in favor of Mr. CUSHING's employment in some such service.

But is this the fortunate moment for a great increase of our territory and population in any direction? Certainly the present population is not crowded upon our present domain, and there is, with equal certainty, not that patriotic unity of feeling which is desirable in a great country. It is, in fact, the very worst moment that could be selected for the policy of territorial expansion with which Mr. SEWARD is so fascinated. What we most need now is to consolidate the population, to make it properly homogeneous, and to develop to the utmost our scarcely known resources. What we need least is an immense addition of foreign traditions and ignorance to the ignorance and disaffection already existing.

In fact, Mr. SEWARD's policy is that of a theorist merely. His feeling probably is, that if we do not obtain the West India Islands some other Power will, and then we shall have a foreigner, possibly an enemy, seated at our very doors. But those islands have always been in European possession, and have they been very dangerous or even threatening to us? And if they changed owners now, if either England or France became the lord of Cuba, would England or France be strengthened by the colony? In case of war between either of those countries and the United States, would the necessity of protecting the faithful island be a striking advantage? Mr. SEWARD's foreign policy is that of a merchant who should be constantly turning aside from his regular and prosperous business to speculations of dazzling promise in fancy stocks. Experience and good sense plead against the tempting dissipation.

What do we want of Cuba? What do we want of Alaska? Have we not immigrants enough now in what may be called the natural order of events, and from the West as well as from the East, from China as well as from Europe, that we should multiply them suddenly and enormously? Is not the feeling of the late rebel States sufficiently bitter and alienated that we should reinforce it with the discontent of a class of Spanish slaveholders? Is not the ignorance with which we must contend dense enough already that we should deepen it with that of West Indian slaves? Is it not better that we should turn our minds to the necessity of becoming a great nation as well as a big nation? Indeed, the policy which Mr. SEWARD favors is a legacy from the dark days of the old rule in this country when expansion was a necessity of slavery. But it is not a necessity of liberty. Instead of an advantage it is now a distinct peril. There was never one good reason given for the Alaska purchase. If that of Cuba is seriously attempted there will still less be any plausible argument for it.

TRADE AND FINANCE.

THE lessons taught by recent vicissitudes must convince the people of the United States that, although a return to specie payments will be attended with present inconvenience and loss, it is wholly unsafe to continue under the present system. The operations of a few managers of the Erie Railroad, in locking up moneys obtained from an unauthorized and secret issue and sale of stock, interfered with the reasonable prospects of all business men throughout that portion of the Union which relied upon paper-money. The wickedness of this proceeding was the greater as it was planned to take effect at a time of deep interest to all, when a large share of capital was used to move our vast agricultural productions from where they are produced to where they are consumed—an object in which every substantial citizen is deeply interested, and which none will frustrate but those who are governed by an extreme selfishness at war with the public good. This action has brought down the price of wheat below what will remunerate our farming interest, and affected the business of the country injuriously. It amounts to a conspiracy against the public welfare, which, we repeat, should be made impossible by penal statutes and united disapprobation.

It is scarcely possible that a scheme of injury so vast can be carried into effect when we reach the solid ground of specie. The purchase and distribution of specie sufficient for the wants of the country will be a costly operation. We shall need probably three hundred millions more than we have. As every dollar of coined money is the result of labor, it will require an equivalent amount of labor to command this sum over and above what is required for support. The country must decide between a system which strikes off money with the printing-press—a thousand-dollar bill as easily as a one—and sets all calculations of value at defiance, and that true system which obtains it from what the world has accumulated, or from its original source, as in either event it will furnish a true test of the value of the labor which it has cost, and for which it is successively exchanged.

Our industry now is subject to the control of speculators, and is commanded by those countries which possess a sound currency, because we have deviated from the true policy. No device will extricate us except that of basing our transactions wholly upon the precious metals. All other expedients are temporary and delusive. We shall grow in wealth, solidity, and integrity in the proportion in which we infuse the precious metals into our monetary affairs. The supremacy foretold for us can never be achieved under a paper system. Under the opposite system our great country, so full of all the material upon which industry can successfully be employed, will know no superiors in supplying easily all the wants of man.

The Secretary of the Treasury, in his recent report to Congress, had the opportunity to enlighten the country as to its true duty at this juncture; but there is one great error into which he has fallen. His ideas of the Legal-Tender policy are wholly erroneous. It was resorted to because of the universal prevalence of a paper system. The error being incapable of correction in war, was adopted and continued during hostilities, and such has been and ever will be the experience of those nations which in time of peace expel the precious metals by the general circulation of paper. If he had contented himself with stating the difficulty in this form, and urged that, having served its purpose with as much efficiency as could be expected from a measure into which we were driven from antecedent errors, no complaint would have been made; but he goes out of his way to show that Mr. WEBSTER had declared its illegality, not distinguishing between the circumstances to which Mr. WEBSTER applied his doctrines and those upon which the Congress acted in establishing the law. Mr. WEBSTER was right in declaring that the policy could not be adopted in peace. Mr. M'CULLOCH is wrong in supposing that the policy is illegal, when under the pressure of war all other means of raising money fail. All other objects are subordinate in war to the great one of saving the country from destruction. With its downfall the rights of property and the obligation of debts might be entirely changed or wholly extinguished. It is the true interest of creditors who are exposed to such a contingency to accept the money which the Government is forced to circulate. Modern nations, under the exigency of war, have made this a precedent which this Government may legally adopt as a "necessary and proper" means in that emergency.

We perhaps owe to Mr. M'CULLOCH that the cases now before the Supreme Court of the United States were held for advisement and re-argument at the present term, and regret the more, as he is about to lay down his office, that he does not exercise the prudent circumspection and foresight with respect to his successor, which induced him to urge a delay in the decision of the Court until his financial arrangements were placed beyond the influence of an adverse decision. The intimate relations which ought to exist between co-ordinate branches of the Government might give to his expressed opinions against this Act of Congress an influence over the Court of an injurious character. A decision against its validity would plunge the country into sudden disorder. It was this belief which induced us to publish in our *Monthly* for December a carefully-prepared article in support of the law. We were fearful that the influence of the Administration might coincide with that of others too powerful to be despised in depriving the country of the sole debt-paying medium—legal tenders—in advance of the circulation of gold and silver. From the brief which we have received from Mr. EVARTS, who, we are gratified to find, argued the case for the Government, we have no fears of the result. The argument upon it was clear, comprehensive, and able, leaving no room for an adverse decision. The country will thus escape another peril due to its paper system, and have the opportunity to substitute by degrees a better, as the former may be from time to time displaced in the necessary process of recovery. The Attorney-General deserves the thanks of the country for his great services in this matter. He unites the qualities of a lawyer and statesman in a degree seldom surpassed.

There will be some uneasiness about the prosecution of business until the Legal-Tender Act shall be sustained by the highest tribunal. Some scarcity of money is complained of, due in part to apprehension from this source. But a healthy business is being done in all branches, care being taken not to carry heavy stocks. It will be the policy of all to prepare for the gradual change which a favorable decision will allow—a change which must take place if it is intended by our law-makers that our manifold industries shall be placed on the solid footing which is essential to true commercial greatness.

The ports on the Baltic and St. Lawrence being now closed with ice, the attention of Great Britain must be turned to us as the source of her needed supplies of food. Egypt and a few ports on the Black Sea will still be in the market as competitors, and San Francisco has still a part of her surplus grain on hand; but the main reliance of England, Spain, and those portions of Europe which suffered from the disastrous drought, must be upon the United States. The quantity of grain imported into England falls short of her importations of 1867; and no fears need be entertained that there will not be a steady and large demand for the whole surplus of our agricultural productions.

THE REPUBLIC IN SPAIN.

THAT the revolution in Spain would proceed to its end as peacefully as it began, although most sincerely to be hoped, and although there was even some show of promise, was hardly to be expected. It must surprise no one, therefore, that difficulties have occurred, and that there have been fights and bloodshed. All those who, for any reason, were dissatisfied with the old system would naturally acquiesce in its overthrow, but their willingness to see the old destroyed would be in the degree of their hope for their own favorite system to replace it. When reconstruction begins, differences appear. But as the appeal in Spain was to be made to the people—that is, to the male adults—those who make trouble before the appeal is taken are, *à priori*, in the wrong. Their action presumptively shows that they expect to be beaten by a peaceful verdict, and that they therefore resort to force. Consequently, when we read that the Republicans have broken up meetings of their opponents, and have finally appeared in arms, the conclusion, until more is known, is that they anticipated defeat and declined to abide by the popular decision.

But the *à priori* view is very often a false view. Those who recall the vote which made LOUIS NAPOLEON emperor may very wisely doubt whether it was a real expression of the popular will; and before judging the Spanish Republicans, still more before condemning them, we must know a great deal more of the secret intrigues of parties in Spain. The Spanish people are ignorant and superstitious beyond most Europeans. The situation of the country favors the ecclesiastical domination under which the country has always suffered. The priesthood as a class are, of course, monarchists. As a rule also, a political priesthood is unscrupulous. Moreover, the leaders of the revolution are not beyond the suspicion of personal ambition; and no one of them has risen to an evident mastery of the country and of the situation. That the intrigues to secure a vote for the monarchy may have been so flagrant and so patent that the Republicans became aware that the appeal was not to be a fair one, is very possible; and they may, therefore, have preferred to take the chances of force rather than to surrender all hope of a change of the political system.

To us, at this distance and with our necessarily imperfect knowledge, there seems to be no hope of a speedy settlement of troubles of this kind when once begun. The absence of any settled government is of course an advantage to an insurrection; for it becomes the interest of the adherents of the old system to increase and perpetuate disorder, that it may be regarded as the consequence of the overthrow of the old government. Again, if the provisional government hopes to represent the monarchical principle as opposed to the republican, it can not count upon the sympathy of the real monarchists, who prefer the old régime; and without any charm of tradition or authority of legitimacy it can hardly appeal to popular ignorance with the force of an enthusiastic republican party demanding and offering popular rights and equality. As yet the news is so confused that the movement can not be well comprehended. But, as we remarked when the revolution began, the republican element will probably be found to have an unsuspected vigor and extent in the country; and PRIM will probably learn that he should have declared for a republic if he wished to govern Spain.

BOGUS BRONZES.

Editor Harper's Weekly:

PERHAPS you will allow me to say to your readers that nine out of ten of the so-called bronzes put up at street auctions about holiday time are not bronze at all, but simply "Berlin iron" castings, bronzed or colored to represent a better material. The chief value of a bronze ornament, or statue, lies in the degree of skill displayed by the designer; next to that the workmanship in carrying out the design; and, lastly, the material. Cast iron may be bronzed to look as well for a time, and a long time, as true bronze, but it is extremely brittle and delicate; and if accidentally overset the principal parts are broken past remedy, of course utterly destroying the value of the article. This is not so with true bronze, which has not only twenty per cent. more strength than cast iron, but bears sudden jar better than it.

The only way for an inexperienced person to tell real bronze from a piece of cast iron is to scratch or cut some of the inside portions with a knife; if the abrasion is white it is iron, if it is yellowish brown it is true bronze. The actual value of iron castings is five cents a pound; of bronze, seven to eight times as much. When I add that auctioneers bid off these castings at the price of true bronzes, it will be seen that some reflection and care must be taken to avoid deception.

EGBERT P. WATSON.

WINTER SCENE.

MOIST-GRAY the hills, through quiet haze,
Along the horizon bend;
Brown faded leaves and withering grass
Toward that faint distance tend.
The voiceless fields with mists are white,
In winter silence sleeping;
Low twilight, by dim clouds led on,
O'er sky and heath is creeping.

Long plashes catch the lessening gleam
In clay-stamped hollows 'biding;
The hope of spring-tide life and joy
In banks and tufts is hiding.
Short winter's day the rolling clouds
With damp and dark are wreathing;
Yet whispers of the coming spring
In westward winds are breathing.

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

CONGRESS.

THE third session of the Fortieth Congress opened at noon on the 7th of December.

In the Senate, the announcement of Senator Edmunds's re-election by the Vermont Legislature was announced with the Governor's certificate.—A communication was offered from the Governor of Georgia. This Mr. Sherman moved to lay on the table, presenting the credentials of the Hon. Joshua Hill as Senator from Georgia. He maintained that Mr. Hill was elected before the expulsion of colored members from the Legislature of that State, and that he could take the oath. The whole subject was temporarily laid on the table.—Mr. Sumner offered a resolution tendering to Spain the best wishes of the American people, also a bill providing for the resumption of specie payments after July, 1869.—Other bills and resolutions were offered affecting naturalization and suffrage.

In the House, several bills and resolutions were offered. Mr. Wood called for the instructions of the Government to Minister Johnson on the *Alabama* question, and for the correspondence.—Mr. Kelly offered a constitutional amendment affecting suffrage, and Mr. Broomall offered still another.

December 8:

In the House, Mr. Garfield reported a bill providing for the transfer of the Indian Bureau from the Department of the Interior to the War Department. The bill was passed, yeas 116, nays 33.

December 9:

In the Senate the President's Message was received. It was so offensive that Mr. Conness, of California, moved to dispense with the further reading, after the portion which scolded Congress for its appropriations for the enforcement of "unnecessary and unconstitutional laws." A debate was thus occasioned, and finally Mr. Conness withdrew his motion, which was renewed by Mr. Cameron. After some discussion an adjournment was concluded upon.

In the House a bill was passed providing for an election to be held in Virginia on the fourth Thursday in May, 1869, at which the citizens of the State should vote upon the adoption of the Constitution agreed upon by the State Constitutional Convention. The President's Message was received, ordered to be laid upon the table, and printed.

December 10:

In the Senate, the House bill transferring the Indian Bureau to the War Department was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs. The conclusion of the President's Message, interrupted the day before, was read, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed. —A resolution was adopted providing for a recess of both Houses from December 21 to January 5.

The President's Message was transmitted to Congress on the 9th of December. Comments upon it will be found in another column.

The Secretary of War, Mr. Schofield, estimates the strength of the army on September 30 at 48,081 men, which, he thinks, will be reduced by January 1 to about 43,000. The Indian war has rendered necessary an additional cavalry force. The disbursements of the Pay Department last year have been nearly $61,000,000; the disbursements for Reconstruction amount to a little over two millions.

A. G. Taylor, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, is opposed to the transfer of the Indian Bureau to the War Department, and recommends that the war policy be ended, and a separate department of Indian affairs be created.

The Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, reports the total number of vessels in use in the navy, including store-ships, tugs, etc., as 206, carrying 1743 guns. Thirty-five of the vessels in use are cruising vessels, with 365 guns, and ten are practice vessels in the Naval Academy. The naval force is classified thus: 52 iron-clads, 129 guns; 95 screw steamers, 938 guns; 28 paddle-wheel steamers, 199 guns; and 31 sailing vessels, with 477 guns.

While there is but one revolutionary soldier now living and drawing a pension, there are upon the rolls 888 *widows* of revolutionary soldiers!

General George W. Cole was on the 7th of December acquitted by the jury trying him for the murder of L. H. Hiscock. The jury found the prisoner sane the moment before and the moment after the murder, but were in doubt as to his sanity at the precise moment when the act was committed.

Deacon Andrews, who has been on trial at Plymouth, Massachusetts, for the murder of Cornelius Holmes, was found guilty on December 9 of manslaughter. In accordance with the laws of the State Deacon Andrews was allowed to present his own statement before the jury. The prisoner was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

The number of lives lost by the disaster on the Ohio River, which we illustrate on another page, is believed to be about sixty-five.

Quarter-master-General Meigs has published the sixteenth number of the Roll of Honor. The number of graves of Union soldiers now recorded in printed form is 150,000, the occupants of which, to the number of 55,000, are as yet unknown. It is conjectured that the full number of graves will reach over 300,000. The whole number of Union soldiers who have died in the war of the rebellion is estimated as 355,000.

FOREIGN NEWS.

Is the long period which has been allowed to elapse before the assembling of the Spanish Cortes a means taken by General Prim to secure his elevation to Dictatorship? This is the question which is now being asked throughout Europe. There is now in Spain a revolution within a revolution. Insurrection has broken out at Cadiz, and a desperate conflict has been waged with heavy losses on both sides. Great political excitement prevails at Xeres, Malaga, and Tarragona. General Prim has started for the southern provinces to restore tranquillity. By the time the Cortes meet may not his acceptance of the Dictatorship of Spain be made to seem indispensable?

An important Clerical Conference was held at Berlin, Prussia, October 15, under the presidency of Dr. Hoffman. At this Conference not a voice was raised for rationalism, which the writer believes to be dying out in Prussia. Some impatience was rather expressed at the tolerance of the authosities; but it was evident that wherever proof could be obtained, any attempt to teach what was contrary to the confessions of the Reformation would be put down by the ecclesiastical authorities. The meeting also exhibited the working of that craving for ecclesiastical unity which is displaying itself in Great Britain, the Colonies, and the United States. The question was discussed: Can an historical symbol be found in which the Lutheran and Reformed Churches can agree? Herr Schulze, a consistorial counselor from Posen, maintained with great ability that the Augsburg Confession of A.D. 1530 was the best œcumenical symbol of the United Evangelical Church of Germany, especially with the addition of its tenth article, which admits the sacramental doctrine of the Calvinists. The Conference seemed pretty unanimous in approving of the confessional basis, and the writer's impression was, that, sooner or later, it will be accepted by the German Churches as the basis of their unity.

The Conference suggested that a united demonstration might be made by the Prussian Church on the 8th of December, 1869, in reply to the papal allocution lately addressed to Protestants. This demonstration might even be on a wider scale. A simultaneous testimony by the whole of the really Protestant churches of the world in favor of the essential truths of the Gospel, published to the world, and arresting attention simultaneously with the great gathering at Rome, would not only be a great means of attesting the real unity of Protestantism, in spite of all that is usually asserted to the contrary by the advocates of Popery, but might become a real means of grace, a remarkable and blessed way of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel in regions of darkness and the shadow of death.

The reference to Roman unity leads us to remark that facts are constantly occurring to show that even within the Roman community two manner of people, or principles, are ever contending—the spirit of liberalism and the spirit of submission. Those who are animated by the desire to advance in the free paths of intellectual, industrial, and political progress, disdain the fetters which Roman influence is perpetually forging for them; and, on the other hand, those who deem spiritual submission the first duty of man are terrified at the spirit of liberalism which is so eager to burst all ecclesiastical fetters. Hungary furnishes an illustration. A Hungarian bishop has published a pastoral, in which he lays it down that the ecclesiastical law remains in full force, in spite of the new marriage law; that a civil marriage is invalid in the eyes of the Church; that the concordat is still in force; that the relation of the Church to the schools is still unaltered; that "the situation" of the Emperor is dreadful. Another bishop has been fined five thousand florins for refusing to deliver up the records of the ecclesiastical marriage court. At Torplitz a marriage took place, the bridegroom being a Protestant and the bride a Catholic. The priest refused to marry without the customary promises as to the bringing up of the children, which were refused. The civil marriage was thereupon celebrated by the governor of the district, in full uniform. An enormous crowd was assembled, and at the close tumultuous cheering was given for the Emperor for freeing them from the ecclesiastical yoke.

In Florence a singular method has been taken for propagating sentiments favorable to liberty and Protestantism. A play founded on the domestic life of Milton has been produced. The sentiments on a free press, the ends and aims of all good government, on the real worth and dignity of letters, on domestic purity, on filial love, were carefully reproduced from Milton's writings, and whole passages from "Paradise Lost" were dextrously inwoven into the play. The poet hurls his denunciations against the superstition and tyranny of the Church and Court of Rome; and is free in his censures of kings, past, present, and future. It is interesting that this has been done under the eyes and the approval of King Victor Emanuel, the lineal descendant of that Duke of Savoy to whom Milton, as Latin Secretary of Cromwell, addressed the indignant remonstrance against the slaughter of the Vandois, commemorated in the immortal sonnet, "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints."

Mr. Peabody has donated an additional half million of dollars to the poor of London.

The steamship *Hibernia*, which sailed from New York for Glasgow November 14, foundered and sunk on the 25th of that month 700 miles to the westward of the Irish coast. There were five boats into which the passengers and crew were placed; two of these were picked up; one, containing 33 persons, was capsized and lost; no information had been at last advices received from the other two. The passengers numbered 83. Fifty-two persons are known to be saved.

The Sultan of Turkey has sent in an *ultimatum* to the King of Greece threatening hostilities if the latter does not cease to render assistance to Cretans. Denmark, England, and France have advised the Grecian Sovereign to accede to the Sultan's demand.

The clouds of sand sent up from Mount Etna fall in the streets of Messina, fifty miles distant.

THE STEAMBOAT DISASTER ON THE OHIO RIVER, NEAR WARSAW, KENTUCKY, December 4, 1868.—Sketched by E. P. Frazer.—[See First Page.]

THE TRUE STORY OF DON JUAN.

WHEN the orange and citron groves of the Alcazar were in their ripest glory, and the gilded palace of the Moors yet wore the freshness that had made it splendid in the days of its first masters, there lived a certain Sevillian hidalgo whose entrance to the Plaza de Toros was the signal for a hum and a whisper among the multitude that filled that bloody arena; whose rare presence at vespers in the dusky aisles of the great cathedral boded ill to some fair worshiper within the solemn fane; a man from the touch of whose infidel fingers the priest withdrew his holy-water brush as from contact with the foul fiend himself; a man behind whose steps followed ever the smothered anathema of the pious and the weak.

This man was Juan Tenorio, one of the twenty-four, the best hated and the most feared among the inhabitants of Seville. Handsome, proud, brave—with a desperate brutal courage—false, and cruel, he was all these, and known to be all these, for he came of a race in which these qualities had been hereditary since the Mohammedan was driven out of Spain.

Don Juan's wealth was even greater than his rank. He was master of many a square mile of vineyard between Seville and Jerez, and owner of a delicious Oriental villa on the banks of the Guadalquivir, built in the true Moorish style, with airy barbaric colonnades, and pierced pavements of colored marble through which a hundred jets of limpid water rose to cool the sultry southern atmosphere, and a quadrangle where a fountain played all day and night amidst a wealth of exotic blossoms, beneath the shade of a wide silken awning. Here, in the idle summer noontide, the noble Sevillian loved to bask, and here, beneath the tender light of the southern moon, were held revels of which all good citizens spoke with a shudder. Dancing-girls and matadors had told strange stories of banquets given in those marble-paved chambers—banquets at which Lucifer himself might have taken the chair; of dances performed in that Moorish quadrangle which might have delighted the Prince of Darkness and his chosen courtiers; of deeds scarcely less terrible than those by which Pedro the Cruel had given the Alcazar a hideous renown. Don Juan Tenorio had elevated vice into a kind of poetry, and refined sin into a science. From his very boyhood his name had been a terror to husbands and fathers and brothers; but of late the good people of Seville had crossed themselves as they spoke of him, as when they pronounced the name of the fiend. His latest crime had surpassed his former villainies, for on this last occasion he had added murder to seduction.

Among those weak enough or bold enough to countenance this man, in spite of his infamous repute, was the Commander Gonzalo de Ulloa, with whose young and beautiful daughter Don Juan Tenorio professed himself eager to form a matrimonial alliance. The Commander was influenced by the rank and wealth of the suitor; the terms of the contract were arranged, and the contracted parties were allowed to meet in the most ceremonious manner on certain rare occasions—the promised bride attended by her duenna, and supported by her proud old father.

Whether Juan entered upon this engagement in good faith at first was only known to himself. Certain it is, that, after a very short courtship, the idea of matrimonial bondage in the future, and the wearisome attendance of father and duenna in the present, became alike obnoxious to him. The habit of evil-doing had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. He was practiced in the corruption of duennas, versed in all delusive arts for the conquest of a weak inexperienced girl, and the end in this case came but too soon. One morning the gossips of Seville were startled by the tidings of Donna Octavia's elopement with Don Juan; and before nightfall a great terror came upon the city with the knowledge that the Commander Don Gonzalo de Ulloa had been found stabbed through the heart on a lonely road twenty miles from the gates.

He had discovered his daughter's disappearance within one hour of the wretched girl's flight; had extorted some half-confession from the unwilling duenna, and had followed the fugitives, attended by one servant, who saw his master overtake a traveling-carriage, in which were a lady and gentleman both masked. The Commander had dragged the gentleman from the carriage, and a sharp encounter had followed on the spot, with fatal result to Don Gonzalo, the lady shrieking piteously all the while. The gentleman had not once removed his mask, and had sprung into the carriage directly after his opponent's fall, crying to the postillions to drive like a thousand devils.

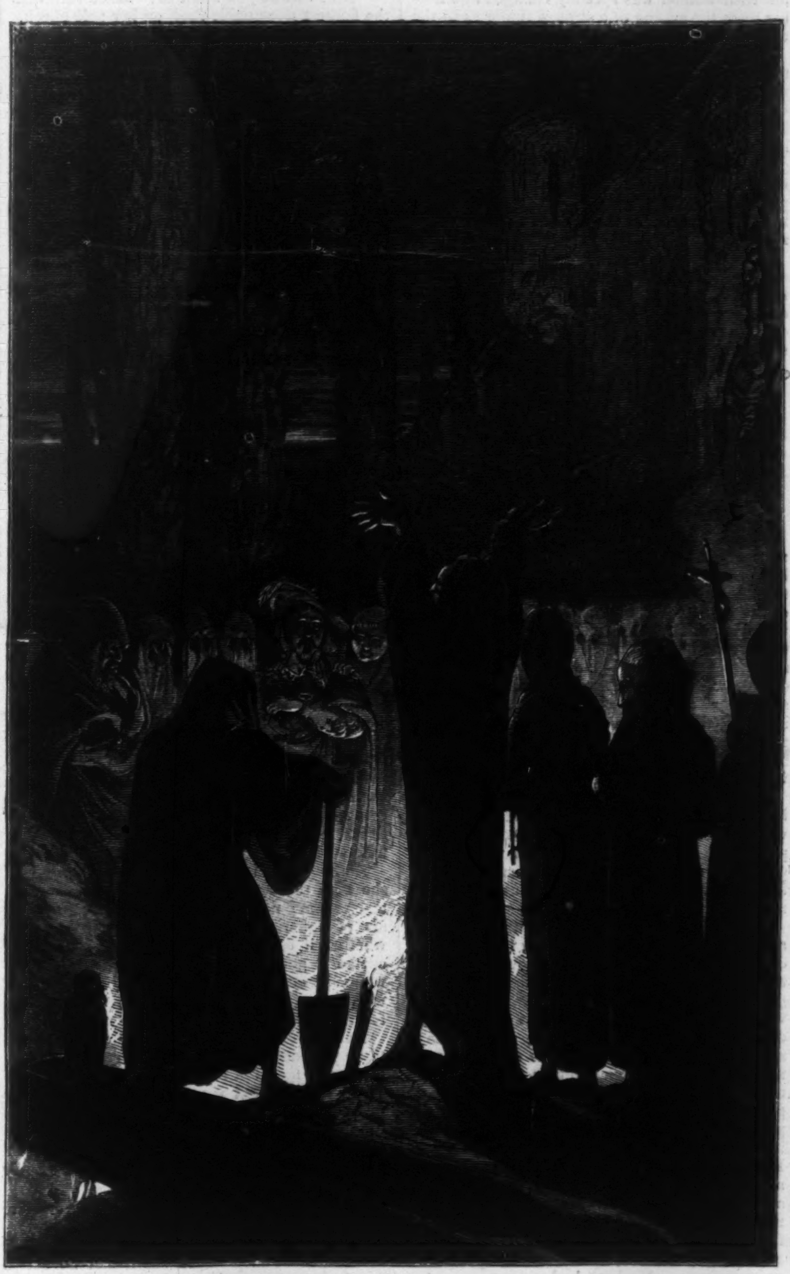
The servant was an inexperienced rustic, who had been but a few weeks in the service of the Commander, and he was unable to identify the masked traveler, but had a kind of idea that it was no other than Don Juan Tenorio, who had graciously sworn at him for a base-born dog more than once upon the occasion of his visits to Don Gonzalo.

The Commander's family were furious against the libertine, scarcely knowing whether to hate him most as the seducer of their kinswoman or as the murderer of their kinsman. Shame was new to their house, and was so much the more bitter to bear. They urged their wrongs in the ears of legal authority, and demanded that the seducer and assassin should be brought before the tribunal of justice; but as the duenna had contrived to disappear from Seville during the confusion that followed her employer's death, there was no direct evidence against Don Juan Tenorio. And besides this difficulty there was another in the fact that Don Juan was not to be found. It was reported that he and his frail companion had embarked at Cadiz on a vessel bound for the East. Don Gonzalo's remains were brought to Seville and interred with much solemnity in the church of the Franciscan monastery, where the house of Ulloa possessed a mortuary chapel, and of which order the only son of the late Commander was a superior; and after affording gossip and excitement for all Seville, the monstrous scandal gradually died away, and, if not forgotten, at least ceased to be a common subject of conversation.

But there was one gloomy mind from which no time could efface the memory of Don Juan's iniquities, there was one chief member of the holy brotherhood of St. Francis from whose thoughts the fatal image of the murderer and seducer was only banished during the supreme service of the altar, and scarcely banished then.

Father Onofrio of the Holy Sepulchre, whose name in the world had been Paez de Ulloa, cherished the memory of his father's death and his sister's disgrace as other men cherish the image of a lost love, or wasted wealth, or long-departed happiness. By day and night his prayers arose to heaven, imploring justice from Him who claims the divine right to avenge all earthly wrongs.

"'Thou hast said 'Vengeance is mine,'" cried the monk. "Surely Thou wilt not suffer this libertine to go unpunished; and if Thou needest an earthly instrument, behold, Thy servant is ready."



"'IT IS NO JEST,' SAID ONE OF THE HOODED MONKS."

Months grew into years, and it seemed as if the brother's pleading were unheard at the supreme tribunal. A marble effigy of the murdered Commander was executed for the mortuary chapel in the church of the Franciscans, a noble image of the dead, "in his habit as he lived," erect and sword in hand, as if standing guardian over the vault below, awfully lifelike in the obscurity of that solemn shrine.

Three years had passed since Donna Octavia's flight, and in all that time the Moorish villa on the banks of the Guadalquivir had been deserted by its master. Suddenly as he had disappeared Don Juan Tenorio came back to his native city; and again his very name was a terror in all virtuous households.

He reappeared with a bold and dauntless front, expressed himself profoundly grieved to hear of Don Gonzalo's death and his daughter's elopement, declared that he had quarreled with and parted from the damsel on the very day before her flight, having reason to suspect her of a low intrigue with one of the matadors of the circus, and had left Seville quietly and alone immediately after this quarrel, since which departure he had been traveling in the Holy Land.

The story was rendered somewhat plausible by the fact that a celebrated matador had disappeared from Seville about the time of Donna Octavia's flight; but the Sevillians were not the less convinced of Juan Tenorio's guilt, and regarded him with a gloomy interest as he stalked among them at bull-fight and festival, shunned yet admired, splendid and lonely.

Unhappily the very fact of his evil reputation rendered him an object of interest in the eyes of foolish women; and from the hour of his return he grew bolder and more successful in crime. The rumor of his return and his new iniquities penetrated to the sombre retreat of the Franciscan monks, and Father Onofrio declared that the hour had come in which the offended majesty of Heaven must be vindicated by an earthly champion. This blasphemous libertine, whose career was devastating as the progress of some dragon of fabulous story—this hardened sinner, whose rank enabled him to defy the law, and whose infidelity mocked the dangers of divine wrath—had come back to the scene of his guilty deeds, and had come to expiate them.

"The hour has arrived," said the superior, in solemn conference with the holy brotherhood. "When the cowardice of venal man shrinks from the duty of chastising the high-born sinner—when the outraged law is powerless, it is time that the Church should assert its authority. This man is an incarnate vice, and it is the office of the Church to vanquish sin. Juan Tenorio must die."

The superior spoke with a tone of conviction that seemed inspiration. His pale care-worn face brightened with an awful radiance; so might look the avenging angel, as he proclaims the doom of a sinner.

"There should be no scandal," faltered one of the brotherhood. "The—deed—must be done secretly."

"The Church can keep her secrets and can answer for her acts to God," replied Father Onofrio, calmly. "For the safety of Seville, for the glory of Heaven, it is expedient this man should perish."

"And the means by which he shall die?" nervously interrogated Brother Ildefonzo.

"Leave the means to Heaven—and to me," replied the superior. "I want to put the question of the righteousness of this deed to the vote. Let those of the brotherhood who are opposed to this act of justice hold up their hands."

There was a solemn silence of some minutes, during which Father Onofrio waited with calm inflexible countenance. No hand was uplifted, no voice pleaded for the abandoned libertine, Juan Tenorio.

"Enough," said the superior; "it is decided. Diximus."

The suppers and dances at the Moorish villa had been gayer than ever since Don Juan's return from his wanderings—unholy festivals, to which men and women stole between dusk and midnight in a stealthy, secret manner. But to have partaken of one of those banquets was to be a lost creature in the sight of all good men and women, and over the gates of that barbaric paradise might have been written, "Who enters here leaves honor and good name behind." The distant flash of many lamps, the fitful sound of gay dance-music or snatches of song floating Sevilleward on the still night-air, were all that respectable people knew, or sought to know, of Don Juan Tenorio's festivities. But 'twas said the morning sun beheld the close of revelries more disgraceful than that fair orb had shone upon since Commodus and his venal favorites greeted the god of day with their drunken chorus of jubilee.

It was at the close of one of these infamous orgies that Juan Tenorio strolled alone on the broad terrace-walk, from which he looked across groves of orange and citron, myrtle and arbutus, to the fair winding river glorified by the morning sun. The festival just ended had wearied and disappointed the giver of the feast. That dread hour had come in which the cup of pleasure begins to pall upon the lips of the libertine, and in which for the first time he asks himself the fatal question, "And is this happiness?" Is this all? Is it to be always the same: lovely eyes with the same fond flattering looks, soft round arms wreathed in the same caresses; music and song as old as life itself; wines that have lost their power to warm the blood; dances whose voluptuous enchantments have ceased to enchant; the mere dull mechanism of profligacy, the dreary *coulisses* of vice? "Is this all that life has left for me?" cries the libertine, drearily. "Oh for some intrigue which shall thrill every sense with the old fire; something mysterious, awful, perilous; something which shall outstep the limits of earthly bliss, and carry my jaded soul into the domain of the supernatural! I am weary of women. Is there no fair fallen angel among the ranks of the damned who will take pity on a soul as lost as her own?"

"A packet for his highness Don Juan Tenorio."

The address was so sudden as to seem like an answer to that blasphemous invocation; but it came only from a messenger who had approached the musing hidalgo with stealthy foot. He handed Don Juan a small packet, carefully sealed with a blank seal, bowed, and disappeared before there was time to interrogate him.

The packet contained a letter and a miniature. Don Juan first examined the miniature. It was exquisitely painted, and it represented a lovelier face than any that Juan Tenorio had ever seen out of his dreams. Dark eyes of marvelous bewitchment, parted lips of ripest crimson, and a smile that was of almost diabolical beauty.

The letter was brief.

"One who has long cherished your image, and watched your career, would fain see you alone. If you are bold enough to venture an interview with a stranger, and in a place not often devoted to such meetings as you attend, come, two hours after midnight, to the Franciscan church, where you will be waited for in the chapel to the left of the high altar."

This was all. The writer made no allusion to the portrait; but could Don Juan doubt that those delicate feminine characters were hers upon whose image he gazed with new hope and passion?

"A rendezvous two hours after midnight in a church!" exclaimed the hidalgo. "This savors of the diabolic. Yes, fair fallen angel, I will come, though the foul fiend himself should make a third at our meeting. The church of the Franciscan monastery? It is surely there that Don Gonzalo was buried; yes, I remember."

This association was scarcely an agreeable one even to Don Juan, who held all things lighter than his own pleasure; but it in nowise deterred him from attending the rendezvous. He looked at the miniature twenty times during the day, wondering how it was he had never beheld the lovely original.

There were no revels that night at the villa, and at one o'clock Don Juan left his house alone and on foot. It was a somewhat memorable departure; for he was destined never again to cross that familiar threshold.

The monastery of the Franciscans was situated in a dreary spot upon the outskirts of the city. Beyond lay the open country, wild and solitary. All was dark and silent, even in the city; but beyond those deserted streets and squares reigned an unspeakable gloom. Intrigue affects darkness, and the unknown senorita had chosen a moonless midnight for her assignation.

As the hidalgo approached the lofty walls of the monastery he began to wonder how he should gain admittance to the church at this dead hour of night. Did the pious Franciscans leave their gates open for the faithful and the penitent all night long? The customs of the pious were not familiar to Don Juan Tenorio, and he could not answer this question.

"My fallen angel has made all things smooth for me, no doubt," he reflected, with an insolent smile: "but a church is a strange place for a post-midnight rendezvous; and if nothing but a church will suit my unknown mistress, I should have been better pleased had she chosen any other fane than that which hallows the ashes of the Commander."

He was close under the walls by this time. The western door of the church stood before him. It was ajar, and he saw a faint light

burning within. He pushed the door open gently, and entered the sacred building with stealthy steps. There was no such feeling as fear in his mind. He was not even awe-stricken by that solemn, time-hallowed solitude. He felt only a chill, unpleasant sense of repugnance to the place, and a vague sentiment of vexation against the folly of the fair one who had selected such a spot and such an hour.

"She must be of a rank to render extreme caution necessary," he thought, "or she would scarcely bring me to such a place."

He walked slowly along the southern aisle, looking to the right and the left. Solitary tapers burned dimly before the images of Virgin and saints. No living creature was to be seen within the solemn precincts. The cautious footsteps of Don Juan Tenorio sounded loud upon the broad stone flags, beneath which reposed the ashes of many a patient brother whose feet had paced them living.

The chapel to the left of the high altar was in deepest shadow. Don Juan's footsteps quickened as he drew near that appointed spot. His heart beat loud and fast with the old eagerness for triumph and conquest. He entered the chapel and stood face to face with—Don Gonzalo de Ulloa.

It was only the Commander's statue, the noble marble effigy of that murdered gentleman, which confronted Don Juan, sword in hand, with—but that was a trick of light and shadow—a vengeful frown upon its lifeless brow.

"St. Jago! if this be meant for a jest, the senorita shall pay dearly for it," muttered Don Juan, when he recovered his breath.

He turned his back on the statue and the mortuary chapel, and looked along the shadowy aisles in search of the person who had summoned him.

At an insignificant door in the opposite aisle he saw a slight black-robed figure beckoning to him with uplifted hand. He crossed the church, and followed this figure through the open door into the grounds of the monastery. Here he would fain have arrested the black-robed stranger; but the unknown kept in advance of him, and pointed onward with commanding gesture.

They crossed a cypress grove and entered a small inclosure surrounded by high walls. It was the ground which had been used as a burial-place for the brotherhood since the vaults below the church had been filled.

Here Juan Tenorio saw a group of monks encircling an open grave. The scene was illumined by torches stuck in the newly-dug earth, that made a bank upon one side of the grave; and the picture had something of the diabolic in the fitful glare of torch-light.

"If this be a jest," cried Don Juan, "it is a sorry one, and the Franciscans shall answer to the king for such an insult to one of the noblest among his servants."

He grasped the loose garment of his unknown guide, who turned toward him with uplifted hood, and showed him the boyish countenance of a young novice.

"It is no jest," said one of the hooded monks, in a voice that was strangely familiar to the libertine; "you have been summoned hither, Don Juan Tenorio, to expiate your many crimes."

"Before what tribunal?"

"The tribunal of the Church. When a sinner of your rank outrages Heaven and man, and defies the laws of his country, it is time that a superior power should take upon itself the punishment of his iniquities. It is better that one man should perish than that the souls of many should be destroyed. You have been the incarnate scourge of your native city; you have sinned with an impunity that is a lasting witness against the cowardice of your fellow-citizens; but you shall do evil no more. Prepare yourself for death, guilty brother; your grave is ready."

Don Juan drew his sword; but a strong hand snatched the weapon from his grasp and flung it to the bottom of that dismal yawning grave. Other hands seized him at the same instant, and bound his arms to his sides with rope. Bound thus, amidst that circle of solemn, black-robed figures, the sinner knew that he was doomed.

"You are allowed half an hour to prepare for death," said the calm voice of the superior. "Kneel, brother, and pray that your guilty soul may be finally purified in the flames of purgatory."

"I believe as much in purgatory as I believe in heaven or hell," answered Don Juan, "and have no breath to waste in prayer. I conclude this performance is some priestly practical joke, or a stratagem for the extortion of money. If it be the latter, you had better name the price of my liberty at once. I am prepared to be liberal, and I deserve to pay dearly for my credulity in coming here at the behest of a lady who exists—"

"Only in a picture of Joseph's Temptation, by Leonardo da Vinci, from which one of our brotherhood, skilled in miniature-painting, copied the head of Potiphar's wife. We knew the style of beauty calculated to attract Don Juan Tenorio," said the superior. "Once more, wretched man, I tell you this is no jest, but solemn earnest; no trick to extort money, but a tribunal to execute summary justice on a villain. And in order that you may believe this the more easily, know that I, who within these sacred walls am called Father Onofrio of the Holy Sepulchre, bore, in the world from which I have withdrawn myself, the name of Paez de Ulloa, only son of the man you murdered, and brother of the woman you seduced.—Now let the *Dies Iræ* be sung, and the sinner prepare for death."

The solemn hymn was chanted, the funeral service was performed. Juan Tenorio stood by, motionless as the statue of the Commander in the mortuary chapel. White as that marble effigy was the face of the condemned, but the haughty lip curved in a defiant sneer, as if in scorn of death itself.

The coffin was brought forward to the brink of the grave, and the victim was lifted in the arms of four stalwart monks and laid living in that last habitation of mortality.

"We would not inflict unnecessary torture even on such a criminal," said Father Onofrio; "a draught has been prepared which will shorten the pangs of death. Brother Ignatius, let the cup be offered to the lips of the condemned."

A monk advanced with a metal goblet in his hand, knelt by the side of the coffin, and offered the vessel to the lips of Don Juan. He drained it in silence. This being done, the lid of the coffin was adjusted and nailed down by two other monks, and then the funeral service proceeded.

The first faint streak of day glimmered in the east as the last shovelful of earth was thrown into the grave; and in that faint morning light the procession of monks moved with slow and solemn step from the burial-ground. A bird began its gay carol as they crossed the monastic garden, beneath the dark cypress avenue, and the bell for matins sounded from the gray church-tower.

The disappearance of Juan Tenorio was the subject of much wonderment to the Sevillians; but their wonder was speedily changed into horror upon the arising of a strange rumor as to the manner of his death.

It seemed that Don Juan had gone at midnight to the church of the Franciscans, and had there insulted the statue of the Commander, Don Gonzalo. And lo, horror of horrors! the statue had been endowed with life and motion, and had invited the insulter to mortal combat; which ghastly challenge being accepted, the effigy had led the way to a waste place beyond the convent garden, and suddenly a great chasm in the earth had opened, and Juan Tenorio was devoured alive.

This story was vouched for by the monks of the Franciscan monastery, certain members of that holy brotherhood having witnessed the awful doom of the profligate. And on such indisputable evidence the story of Don Juan passed into the records of Seville, a never-to-be-forgotten legend of human guilt and supernatural retribution.

THAT BOY OF NORCOTT'S.

CHAPTER IX.

MADAME CLEREMONT.

FROM that day forth I received no tidings of my mother. Whether my own letters reached her or not I could not tell; and though I entreated Madame Cleremont, who was now my confidant in every thing, to aid me in learning where my mother was, she declared that the task was beyond her; and at last, as time went over, my anxieties became blunted and my affections dulled. The life I was leading grew to have such a hold upon me, and was so full of its own varied interests, that—with shame I say it—I actually forgot the very existence of her to whom I owed any trace of good, or honest, or truthful, that was in me.

The house in which I was living was a finishing school for every sort of dissipation, and all who frequented it were people who only lived for pleasure. Play of the highest kind went on unceasingly, and large sums were bandied about from hand to hand as carelessly as if all were men of fortune and indifferent to heavy losses. A splendid mode of living, sumptuous dinners, a great retinue, and perfect liberty to the guests, drew around us that class who, knowing well that they have no other occupation than self-indulgence, throw an air of languid elegance over vice, which your vulgar sinner, who has only intervals of wickedness, knows nothing of; and this, be it said passingly, is, of all sections of society, the most seductive and dangerous to the young: for there are no outrages to taste among these people, they violate no decencies, they shock no principles. If they smash the tables of the law it is in kid gloves, and with a delicious odor of Ess bouquet about them. The Cleremonts lived at the Villa. Cleremont managed the household, and gave the orders for every thing. Madame received the company and did the honors; my father lounging about like an unoccupied guest, and actually amused, as it seemed, by his own unimportance. Hotham had gone to sea; but Eccles remained, in name, as my tutor; but we rarely met, save at meal-times, and his manner to me was almost slavish in subserviency, and with a habit of flattery that, even young as I was, revolted me.

"Isn't that your charge, Eccles?" I once heard an old gentleman ask him; and he replied, "Yes, my lord; but Madame Cleremont has succeeded me. It is *she* is finishing him."

And they both laughed heartily at the joke. There was, however, this much of truth in the speech, that I lived almost entirely in her society. We sang together; she called me Cherubino, and taught me all the pages' songs in Mozart or Rossini; and we rode out together, or read or walked in company. Nor was her influence over me such as might effeminate me. On the contrary, it was ever her aim to give me manly tastes and ambitions. She laid great stress on my being a perfect swordsman and a pistol-shot, over and over telling me that a conscious skill in arms gives a man immense coolness in every question of difference with other men; and she would add, "Don't fall into that John Bull blunder of believing that dueling is gone out because they dislike the practice in England. The world is happily larger than the British Islands."

Little sneers like this at England, sarcasms on English prudery, English reserve, or English distrustfulness, were constantly dropping from her, and I grew up to believe that, while genuine sentiment and unselfish devotion lived on one side of the Channel, a decorous hypocrisy had its home on the other.

Now she would contrast the women of Balzac's novels with the colder nonentities of English fiction; and now she would dwell on traits of fascination in the sex which our writers either did not know of or were afraid to touch on. "It is entirely the fault of your Englishwomen," she would say, "that the men invariably fall victims to foreign seductions. Circe always sings with a bronchitis in the North;" and though I but dimly saw what she pointed at then, I lived to perceive her meaning more fully.

As for my father, I saw little of him, but in that little he was always kind and good-natured with me. He would quiz me about my lessons, as though I were the tutor, and Eccles the pupil; and ask me how he got on with his Aristophanes or his Homer? He talked to me freely about the people who came to the house, and treated me almost as an equal. All this time he behaved to Madame with a reserve that was perfectly chilling, so that it was the rarest thing in the world for the three of us to be together.

"I don't think you like papa," said I once to her, in an effusion of confidence. "I am sure you don't like him!"

"And why do you think so?" asked she, with the faintest imaginable flush on her pale cheek.

While I was puzzling myself what to answer, she said:

"Come now, Cherubino, what you really meant to say was, I don't think papa likes *you!*"

Though I never could have made so rude a speech, its truth and force struck me so palpably that I could not answer.

"Well," cried she, with a little laugh, "he is very fond of Monsieur Cleremont, and that ought always to be enough for Madame Cleremont. Do you know, Cherubino, it's the rarest thing in life for a husband and wife to be liked by the same people. There is in conjugal life some beautiful little ingredient of discord that sets the two partners to the compact at opposite poles, and gives them separate followings. I mustn't distract you with the theory, I only want you to see why liking my husband is sufficient reason for not caring for *me.*"

Now, as I liked her exceedingly, and felt something very near to hatred for Monsieur Cleremont, I accepted all she said as incontestible truth. Still I grieved over the fact that papa was not of my own mind, and did not see her and all her fascinations as I did.

There is something indescribably touching in the gentle sadness of certain buoyant bright natures. Like the low notes in a treble voice, there is that that seems to vibrate in our hearts at a most susceptible moment, and with the force of an unforeseen contrast; and it was thus that, in her graver times, she won over me an ascendency, and inspired an interest which, had I been other than a mere boy, had certainly been love.

Perhaps I should not have been even conscious, as I was, of this sentiment, if it were not for the indignation I felt at Cleremont's treatment of her. Over and over again my temper was pushed to its last limit by his brutality and coarseness. His tone was a perpetual sneer, and his wife seldom spoke before him without his directing toward her a sarcasm or an impertinence. This was especially remarkable if she uttered any sentiment at all elevated, when his banter would be ushered in with a burst of derisive laughter.

Nothing could be more perfect than the way she bore these trials. There was no assumed martyrdom; no covert appeal for sympathy; no air of suffering asking for protection. No! whether it came as ridicule or rebuke, she accepted it gently and good-humoredly; trying, when she could, to turn it off with a laugh, or when too grave for that, bearing it with quiet forbearance.

I often wondered why my father did not check these persecutions, for they were such, and very cruel ones too; but he scarcely seemed to notice them, or if he did it would be by a smile, far more like enjoyment of Cleremont's coarse wit than reprehending or reproving it.

"I wonder how that woman stands it," I once overheard Hotham say to Eccles; and the other replied:

"I don't think she *does* stand it. I mistake her much if she is as forgiving as she looks."

Why do I recall these things? why do I dwell on incidents and passages which had no actual bearing on my own destiny? Only because they serve to show the terrible school in which I was brought up; the mingled dissipation, splendor, indolence, and passion in which my boyhood was passed. Surrounded by men of reckless habits, and women but a mere shade better, life presented itself to me as one series of costly pleasures, dashed only with such disappointments as loss at play inflicted, or some project of intrigue baffled or averted.

"If that boy of Norcott's isn't a scamp he must be a most unteachable young rascal," said an old colonel once to Eccles on the croquet-ground.

"He has had great opportunities," said Eccles, as he sent off his ball, "and, so far as I see, neglected none of them."

"You were his tutor, I think," said the other with a laugh.

"Yes, till Madame Cleremont took my place."

"I'll not say it was the worst thing could have happened him. I wish it had been a woman had spoiled *me.* Eh, Eccles, possibly you may have some such misgivings yourself?"

"I was never corrupted," said the other, with a sententious gravity whose hypocrisy was palpable.

I meditated many and many a time over these few words, and they suggested to me the first attempt I ever made to know something about myself and my own nature.

Those stories of Balzac's, those wonderful pictures of passionate life, acquired an immense hold upon me, from the very character of my own existence. That terrific game of temper against temper, mind against mind, and heart against heart, of which I read in these novels, I was daily witnessing in what went on around me, and I amused myself by giving the names of the characters in these fictions to the various persons of our society.

"It is a very naughty little world we live in at this house, Digby," said Madame to me one day; "but you'd be surprised to find what a very vulgar thing is the life of people in general, and that if you want the sensational or even the pictorial in existence, you'll have to pay for it in some compromise of principle."

"I know mamma wouldn't like to live here," said I, half sullenly.

"Oh, mamma!" cried she, with a laugh, and then suddenly checking herself: "No, Digby, you are quite right. Mamma would be shocked at our doings; not that they are so very wicked in themselves as that, to one of her quiet ways, they would seem so."

"Mamma is very good. I never knew any one like her," stammered I out.

"That's quite true, my dear boy. She is all that you say, but one may be too good, just as he may be too generous or too confiding; and it is well to remember that there are a number of excellent things one would like to be if they could afford them; but the truth is, Digby, the most costly of all things are virtues."

"Oh, do not say that!" cried I, eagerly.

"Yes, dear, I must say it. Monsieur Cleremont and I have always been very poor, and we never permitted ourselves these luxuries, any more than we kept a great house and a fine equipage, and so we economize in our morals, as in our means, doing what rich folk might call little shabbinesses; but on the whole managing to live, and not unhappily either."

"And papa?"

"Papa has a fine estate, wants for nothing, and can give himself every good quality he has a fancy for."

"By this theory, then, it is only rich people are good?"

"Not exactly. I would rather state it thus—the rich are as good as they like to be; the poor are as good as they're able."

"What do you say then to Mr. Eccles—he's not rich, and I'm sure he's good?"

"Poor Mr. Eccles!" said she, with a merry laughter, in which a something scornful mingled, and she hurried away.

CHAPTER X.

PLANNING PLEASURE.

IT was my father's pleasure to celebrate my fifteenth birthday with great splendor. The whole house was to be thrown open; and not only the house, but the conservatory and the grounds were to be illuminated. The festivities were to comprise a grand dinner and a reception afterward, which was to become a ball, as if by an impromptu.

As the society of the Villa habitually was made up of a certain number of intimates, relieved from time to time by such strangers as were presented, and as my father never dined out, or went into the fashionable world of the place, it was somewhat of a bold step at once to invite a number of persons with whom he had no more than bowing acquaintance, and to ask to his table ministers, envoys, court officials, and grand chamberlains for the first time. It was said, I know not how truthfully, that Cleremont did his utmost to dissuade him from the project at first, by disparaging the people for whom he was putting himself to such cost, and finding this line of no avail, by openly saying that what between the refusals of some, the excuses of others, and the actual absence of many whose presence he was led to expect, my father was storing up for himself an amount of disappointment and outrage that would drive him half desperate. It was not, of course, very easy to convey this to my father. It could only be done by a dropping word or a half-expressed doubt. And when the time came to make out the lists and issue the invitations, no real step had been taken to turn him from his plan.

The same rumor which ascribed to Cleremont the repute of attempting to dissuade my father from his project attributed to Madame Cleremont a most eager and warm advocacy of the intended fête. From the marked coldness and reserve, however, which subsisted between my father and her, it was too difficult to imagine in what way her influence could be exercised.

And for my own part, though I heard the list of the company canvassed every day at luncheon, and discussed at dinner, I don't remember an occasion where Madame ever uttered a word of remark, or even a suggestion in the matter. Hotham, who had come back on a short leave, was full of the scheme. With all a sailor's love of movement and bustle, he mixed himself up with every detail of it. He wrote to Paris and London for all the delicacies of the "comestible" shops. He established "estafettes" on every side to bring in fresh flowers and fruit; with his own hands he rigged out tents and marquees for the regimental bands, which were to be stationed in different parts of the grounds; and all the devices of Bengal-lights and fire-works he took into his especial charge.

Indeed, Nixon told me that his functions did not stop here, but that he had charged himself with the care of Madame Cleremont's toilet, for whom he had ordered the most splendid ball-dress Paris could produce. "Naturally, Master Digby, it is Sir Roger pays," added he; "and perhaps one of these days he'll be surprised to find that diamond loops and diamond bouquets should figure in a milliner's bill. But as she is to receive the company, of course it's all right."

"And why does Mr. Cleremont seem to dislike it all so much?" asked I.

"Chiefly, I believe, because *she* likes it." And then, as though he had said more than he intended, he added, "Oh, it's easy to see he likes to keep this house as much his own as he can. He doesn't want Sir Roger to have other people about him. He's almost the master here now; but if your father begins to mix with the world, and have strangers here, Cleremont's reign would soon be over."

Though there was much in this speech to suggest thought and speculation, nothing in it struck me so forcibly as the impertinence of calling Mr. Cleremont, Cleremont, and it was all I could do to suppress the rebuke that was on my lips.

"If your father comes through for a thousand pounds, Sir," continued he, "I'll say he's lucky. If Sir Roger would leave it to one person to give the orders—I don't mean myself—though by right it is my business; instead of that, there's the captain sending for this, and Cleremont for the other, and you'll see there will be enough for three entertainments when it's all over. Could you just say a word to him, Sir?"

"Not for the world, Nixon. Papa is very kind to me, and good-natured, but I'll not risk any liberty with him; and what's more, I'd be right sorry to call Mr. Cleremont, Cleremont before him, as you have done twice within the last five minutes."

"Lord bless you, Master Digby! I've known him these fifteen years. I knew him when he came out, just a boy like, to Lord Colthorpe's embassy. He and I is like pals."

"You have known *me* also as a boy, Nixon," said I, haughtily; "and yet, I promise you, I'll not permit you to speak of me as Norcott when I am a man."

"No fear of that, Sir, you may depend on't," said he, with humility; but there was a malicious twinkle in his eye, and a firm compression of the lip, as he withdrew, that did not leave my mind the whole day after. Indeed, I recognized that his face had assumed the self-same look of insolent familiarity it wore when he spoke of Cleremont.

The evening of that day was passed filling up the cards of invitation—a process which amused me greatly, affording, as it did, a sort of current critique on the persons whose names came up for notice, and certainly, if I were to judge of their eligibility only by what I heard of their characters, I might well feel amazed why they were singled out for attentions. They were marquises and counts, however, chevaliers of various orders, grand cordons and "hautes charges," so that their trespasses or their shortcomings had all been enacted in the world of good society, and with each other as accomplices or victims. There were a number of contingencies, too, attached to almost every name. There must be high play for the Russian envoy, flirting for the French minister's wife, iced drinks for the Americans, and scandal and Ostend oysters for every body. There was scarcely a good word for any one, and yet the most eager anxiety was expressed that they would all come. Immense precautions had been taken to fix a day when there was nothing going on at court or in the court circle. It was difficult to believe that pleasure could be planned with such heart-burning and bitterness. There was scarcely a detail that did not come associated with something that reflected on the morals or the manners of the dear friends we were entreating to honor us; and for the life of me I did not know why such pains were taken to secure the presence of people for whom none had a good wish nor a single kindly thought.

My father took very little part in the discussion; he sat there with a sort of proud indifference, as though the matter had little interest for him, and if a doubt were expressed as to the likelihood of this or that person's acceptance, he would superciliously break in with, "He'll come, Sir; I'll answer for that. I have never yet played to empty benches."

This vain and haughty speech dwelt in my mind for many a day, and showed me how my father deemed that it was not his splendid style of living, his exquisite dinners, and his choice wines that drew guests around him, but his own especial qualities as host and entertainer.

"But that it involves the bore of an audience, I'd ask the King; I could give him some Château d'Yquem very unlike his own, and such as, I'll venture to say, he never tasted," said he, affectedly.

"So you are going to bring out the purple seal?" cried Cleremont.

"I might for royalty, Sir; but not for such people as I read of in that list there."

"Why, here are two dukes with their duchesses, marquises and counts by the score, half a dozen ministers plenipotentiary, and a perfect cloud of chamberlains and court swells."

"They'd cut a great figure, I've no doubt, Hotham, on the quarter-deck of the *Thunder Bomb*, where you eke out the defects of a bad band with a salute from your big guns, and give your guests the national anthem when they want Champagne. Oh dear, there's no snob like a sailor!"

"Well, if they're not good enough for you, why the devil do you ask them?" cried Hotham, sturdily.

"Sir, if I were to put such a question to myself I might shut up my house to-morrow!" And with this very uncourteous speech he arose and left the room.

We continued, however, to fill in the cards of invitation and address the envelopes, but with little inclination to converse, and none whatever to refer to what had passed.

"There," cried Cleremont, as he checked off the list. "That makes very close on seven hundred. I take it I may order supper for six hundred." Then turning half fiercely to me, he added, "Do you know, youngster, that all this tomfoolery is got up for *you?* It is by way of celebrating your birthday we're going to turn the house out of the windows!"

"I suppose my father has that right, Sir."

"Of course he has, just as he would have the right to make a ruin of the place to-morrow if he liked it; but I don't fancy his friends would be the better pleased with him for his amiable eccentricity; your father pushes our regard for him very far sometimes."

"I'll tell him to be more cautious, Sir, in future," said I, moving toward the door.

"Do so," said he. "Good-night."

I had scarcely taken my bedroom candle when I felt a hand on my shoulder: I turned and saw Madame Cleremont standing very pale and in great agitation at my side. "Oh, Digby," said she, "don't make that man your enemy whatever you do; he is more than a match for you, poor child!" She was about to say more when we heard voices in the corridor, and she hurried away and left me.

A COUNTRY PASTOR IN NORWAY.

IT has been the good fortune of the writer of the following sketch to see a good deal of the Norwegian clergy in their country homes; and as their parishes, their mode of life, their habits and tastes differ so essentially from those of our country clergy, it has occurred to him that a brief account of the same might not be without interest.

Extending over so many degrees of latitude, with such a large sea-board, and abounding with such enormous tracts of forest-land, and mountains and valleys, it will readily be seen that the life of a pastor in many of these differs materially from that in others. Thus, a description of a pastor's life in a mountainous district would by no means hold good for a parish on the western coast, where he has constantly to contend against the fierce storms of the Atlantic, while visiting some of his island flock; whereas, in the former he has, at least in winter-time, almost daily to face the snow and the ice, undertake long journeys in the piercing cold, sometimes in a sledge, but most generally on snow *ski* (skates). The ski are long, narrow pieces of seasoned wood, furnished with a loop in the middle of each, into which the *löber*, or runner, inserts his foot. By means of a pole in his hands, wherewith to guide his course, a clever runner can travel easily eight or nine miles an hour on level ground; while the velocity with which he can descend an almost perpendicular mountain-side, and the skill with which he avoids the rocks and trees in his way, against which, if he were to stumble, death would probably be the result, are wonderful to behold. It seems strange to speak of a congregation skating in this manner to church; but such is often, nay, generally, the case in winter-time, when the snow lies at an incredible depth; and, stranger still, what is also of frequent occurrence, to think of the pastor, too, skating to the house of God. I witnessed a sight one Sunday, a few years ago, which has made an ineffaceable impression on my mind. Let me try to sketch it. It was a clear bright Sunday; the thermometer degrees below zero, I fear to say how many; but so still and calm that the excessive cold was not only endurable, but positively enjoyable. I was staying with a pastor in a mountain parish, and the church was but a little distance from the parsonage-house.

"You will see a strange sight, I think, to-day," said my host, as we were preparing to set out to church, which was close by. There was another district church, about thirty miles off, on the other side the mountain, I should state, where duty was only held in the summer months, and that only monthly. And indeed it was a strange sight. Far off in the distance, I could discern a number of objects moving swiftly down a mountain-slope—there were about thirty or forty, as far as I could make out, in all. What they were, I could not at first conceive, but presently they again came into view, and I could see that they were men, women, and children, of all ages and sizes. It was christening Sunday, and several of the women were carrying their infants on their backs in an ingeniously contrived kind of basket, without apparently suffering any inconvenience.

In the far north, indeed, my host informed me, the Lapps, who are very skillful "runners," and punctilious in the discharge of their religious duties, bury their children in the snow outside the church, while they, the parents, attend the service. Do not start, reader! The reason is, that their cries might disturb the congregation; and it is far warmer for them underneath the snow, wrapped up in a *pelts*, or skin, than in the church. A trusty dog is stationed near them, to keep off the wolves, should any be prowling about in the neighborhood.

Let me now introduce the reader to a parish in Valders, in the southern part of the country. I conceal the name; but those who are as intimately acquainted with that part of Norway as I am myself may perchance recognize it from my description. Should they do so, I feel confident that its worthy pastor will not feel annoyed with me for bringing his habitat so prominently forward. It is a large parish to manage, measuring as it does twenty-five miles from one extremity to the other. It consists of a narrow valley, along the bottom of which runs the beautiful Begna River, while its sides are bounded by lofty mountains on either side. Toward its northern part the valley widens out, and the mountain-sides are not of such imposing height or steepness as in the southern part. Hereabouts live the greater number of the parishioners; and here, too, far up in the forest-tracts which cover the mountain-tops, the bear would find a safe and secure retreat were any hunter less daring and less skillful than a Valders *jäger* to seek him in his lair.

The parsonage-house consists, as is usually the case in Norway, of four or five detached wooden houses, each of which has its respective use. There are five churches in this parish, three of which are situated in the main valley, while the two others lie at a considerable distance off in remote mountain defiles. The two most northerly churches are not more than four miles apart; but between are lofty and rugged heights, the like of which are scarcely to be found in any other part of the land. To the other two main churches, it is respectively fifteen and twenty miles from the parsonage. Though the present pastor keeps what is termed a *capellan*, or curate, it is impossible that divine service can be performed in all the above churches; indeed, —— church, famous for a bear-story connected with it, only sees its pastor four or five times a year. House-to-house visitation in such a widely extended parish is, of course, an impossibility, rendered, in this case, still more impossible from the large number of souls—about seven thousand—it contains. But though this be the case, what with so many churches on his hands, and such a large parish to see after, the poor pastor and his capellan are very hard worked.

There are, I believe, fourteen fixed schools in the parish; while in the forest and mountain districts, in lonely farm-houses, in out-of-the-way parts, the education of the children is attended to by traveling teachers. The supervision of these forms one of the most arduous duties a pastor has to fulfill, especially as in Norway education is compulsory, and parents are severely punished if their children do not frequent the schools when they have arrived at the age of nine, unless, of course, bad health, insanity, or other natural causes render it an impossibility. In the fixed school, besides reading, writing, and religious instruction, the history and geography of Norway, and arithmetic, are taught. Each spring the pastor has to inspect every school in his parish, and to satisfy himself, after a strict examination of the scholars, that the teachers have fulfilled their duties duly.

During the winter months his time is occupied by preparing candidates for confirmation; for confirmation is, or rather till recently was, compulsory in every member of the Norwegian Church. The candidates are obliged to attend twice a week, for three or four hours at a time, to receive instruction, either at the parsonage-house or at some other convenient place. The education of the poorer classes is free; while that of the better classes costs but a trifling sum, as the schoolmasters' salaries, etc., are defrayed by an "education-tax."

When the pastor went to preach in the two distant churches of his parish he always left home on the Saturday afternoon, seldom returning till the following Tuesday or Wednesday, so as to give himself time for visiting any sick parishioners. In addition to his spiritual duties, a Norwegian pastor must also be something of a doctor, for medical men in country districts are few and far between. My host never went any where without his medicine-chest; while his wife's time was not a little occupied in administering to the wants of the sick nearer home.

Whatever time the pastor may have over after having discharged the above-described duties, he usually devotes to the management of his farm, which he generally prefers to retain in his own hands instead of letting it. My friend's farm happened to be rather a small one in comparison to the size of his parish.

And now as regards the diversions and amusements of a country pastor's life. Naturally, in a *fjeld* or mountain parish, far away from any town, and shut out from intercourse with educated people, these must needs be few and simple in their nature. Still, in the summer months, there are visits to make and receive; acquaintances from Christiania dropping in, in order to enjoy some of the fine shooting and fishing with which Valders abounds. Winter is the trying time. Not only do the wildness of the scene and the monotony of the snow-covered earth have a depressing effect upon the frame, but social intercourse becomes rarer, visits more seldom, and every one thinks of keeping the cold out, rather than of pleasure-making; and yet the winter evenings are by no means devoid of pleasure. In a country parsonage-house the time is occupied partly in reading aloud, in studying, in music, etc., and last, but not least, in enjoying supper, that happy meal; after which, maybe, a rubber of whist and a pipe, and then to bed beneath a quilt of eider-down.

Need I say that post-day is always considered a red-letter day in a country parsonage-house?

HOME AND FOREIGN GOSSIP.

WE may expect the height of the skating season about the time of Christmas and New-Year's. To be sure heavy snow-storms may again interfere, and pleasure-loving New York be obliged to solace itself with the merry jingling of sleigh-bells; yet every body who knows by experience the fascinations of skating longs for the snapping cold days in which the Old Year usually steps shiveringly out and the bright New Year comes dancing in.

The Central Park Commissioners can not make ice, but they have given Jack Frost every opportunity to exercise his skill to the uttermost. And when he has done his best they will do *their* best to keep the ponds in good skating condition—a matter of no little care and expense. Winter houses for refreshment and rest have been erected near the Park ponds, as in former seasons; and with every cold snap there will be a rush Park-ward. A novelty for New Yorkers this season is the Empire Skating Rink, on Third Avenue and Sixty-third Street; and it will doubtless be a very good substitute for some of the private ponds in the upper part of the city, which have been fashionably patronized in seasons past, but are now overrun with brick and mortar. This new rink is 170 feet wide and 350 feet long. The inclosed shallow lake of water is 126 feet in width and 290 in length. Between six and seven hundred gas jets illuminate the interior; there is a gallery for a band of music, and comfortable seats for spectators; moreover, there are plenty of refreshment rooms. This skating rink is said to be the largest and most perfect building of the kind in the country. A similar one is now being constructed in Philadelphia; also, an immense rink will be finished in Brooklyn about Christmas. It is 124 feet by 200, and will have an ice surface of something like 90 by 170 feet. There is, moreover, a new rink in Jersey City. With these additional accommodations for skating the youthful lovers of this exhilarating amusement will probably enjoy more this season than ever before.

The design of the New England Christian Temperance Convention, which was recently held in Boston, was to create a deeper interest in the temperance question among the people and in the churches, and to show how the moral and religious circles of New England in general, and Massachusetts in particular, looked upon the subject in point of law. All but one member of the Convention—which was composed of about three hundred gentlemen, mostly ministers—was in full sympathy with the total abstinence and prohibitory liquor law party.

According to the report of the special Commissioners appointed by the President of the United States to examine the Union Pacific Railroad, they are of opinion that, taken as a whole, it has been well constructed, and the general route exceedingly well selected.

The whole number of dead letters received at the Dead-Letter Office during the year which ended June 30 was 4,162,144; 1,736,867 of these were found to be either not susceptible of being returned or of no importance, and were destroyed; about 333,000 more were destroyed after an effort to return them. The remainder were classified and returned to the owners as far as practicable. The whole number sent from the office was 2,258,199, of which about 84 per cent. were delivered to owners; 18,340 letters contained $95,169 52, in sums of $1 and upward, of which 16,061 letters, containing $86,638 66, were delivered to owners; 14,082 contained $3436 68 in sums of less than $1, of which 12,513, containing $3120 70, were delivered to owners; 17,750 contained drafts, deeds, and other papers of value, representing the value of $3,609,271 80; of these 16,809 were restored to the owners; 13,964 contained books, jewelry, and other articles of property, of the estimated value of $8560; of these 11,489 were forwarded for delivery, and 9911 were delivered to their owners; 125,221 contained articles of small value, of which 114,666 were delivered to owners; 58,387 letters received at the office were misdirected, and 1593 had no direction whatever. The amount of money taken from all dead-letters undelivered since last report, and deposited in the United States Treasury, was $27,967 71. The amount realized from sales of waste paper, and deposited, was $1280 42.

A school has been founded in Charleston, South Carolina, under the name of the "Shaw Free School," for the education of colored youth. The money, which was contributed by the colored troops of South Carolina to erect a monument to the memory of Colonel Robert G. Shaw, who was killed in the assault at Fort Wagner, has been, after deliberation, appropriated to this object. The building is occupied by a flourishing school of nearly five hundred pupils, with eight or nine teachers.

An unprecedented case has been brought up in an English court. A petition was presented to dissolve an injunction granted two years ago under peculiar circumstances. A ward of the court, fifteen years of age, entitled to property yielding an annual income of about £130, married his governess, aged twenty-five years, and after a private hearing of the case the court granted an injunction to prevent them living together until the youth could gain his own livelihood, and ordered him to be apprenticed to a farmer. The parties were married upon misrepresentation as to their ages, but the Divorce Court had since held that the marriage was valid. The court expressed the opinion that it could not be for the interest of a boy of seventeen, without the means of subsistence, to live with his wife, and held it to be the duty of the court to protect its ward. The question was held for further consideration.

Perhaps no more remarkable verdict was ever rendered in a criminal cause than in the case of General George W. Cole, recently tried for the murder of Mr. L. H. Hiscock. The jury found the prisoner to be perfectly sane a moment before the murder and also a moment after, but were in doubt about his condition at the moment of firing his pistol. Under these circumstances the Judge directed them to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, and they accordingly brought in a verdict of acquittal. There is an old proverb, *Ira furor brevis est;* this was doubtless one of the *maxims* in the legal code upon which the jury based their decision.

One of the boldest operations known to surgery was recently performed by Dr. Carnochan, of this city, by which a tumor weighing sixty-four pounds was removed from the abdomen of a young woman. The subject of this skillful operation is now in the enjoyment of health and comfort.

A new method of preserving wood has lately been patented, and its application will evidently form a new era in wood manufacture; for, in addition to the preservative qualities engendered, it insures the wood against cracking, shrinking, warping, or chipping, and renders it far less liable to break than in the original state. The wood is permeated by the vapors produced from coal-tar, subjected to increasing degrees of heat, which drives out all moisture, condenses the wood, and protects it completely against atmospheric moisture. It is believed that this process will be very useful when applied to wood exposed to the action of water or earth.

Every body thinks, or wants to think, that he lives in the biggest place.

"You must confess," remarked a New York to a Chicago merchant, as they were discussing the merits of their respective cities, "that New York is the metropolis of the country." "Yes," replied the man of the West; "New York is a right smart place for business. New York is the *Chicago* of the East." Another Westerner gave it as his opinion "that New York was too far from Indianapolis ever to be much of a place." Which reminds us of the remark made by a rough farmer who lived at the foot of a high mountain in Maine, miles away from any neighbors. A young man from New York roaming about on a fishing tramp stumbled upon the farmer's lonely house. They entered into conversation, and learning that his guest was from New York, the worthy man exclaimed, in unfeigned surprise: "Well, now, how can you stand it to live so far away from folks?"

There was a time when women and children were scarce in San Francisco. They were then appreciated. According to the *Westminster Review*, a woman once took her infant to a theatre in San Francisco, and just as the orchestra began to play the child began to cry. A man in the pit cried out, "Stop those fiddles and let the baby cry. I haven't heard such a sound for ten years!" The audience applauded this sentiment; the orchestra stopped, and the baby continued its performance amidst unbounded enthusiasm.

THE HOLY FAMILY.—[FROM A PAINTING BY RIBERA SPAGNOLETTO.]

THE INDIAN CAMPAIGN—PRISONERS CAPTURED BY GENERAL CUSTER.—Sketched by Theodore R. Davis.—[See Page 826.]

INDIAN PRISONERS TAKEN BY CUSTER.

OUR engraving on page 825 illustrates a peculiar feature of SHERIDAN'S plan of Indian warfare. His object is to break up the nomadic habits and to destroy the irregular settlements of the hostile Indians. He finds them as at Black Kettle village out of their proper place; he pounces upon them, shows his power by a physical conquest, breaks up their villages and lodges; but after that comes the most important and most difficult portion of his work: he has to bag the whole parcel of vanquished savages and bear them off—the warriors, the aged, and the young—to their proper reservation. And there the Indian must stay, understanding that if again found wandering he must suffer the severest penalties of martial law.

The action of Congress in transferring the entire management of Indian affairs to the War Department will very materially facilitate General SHERIDAN'S operations. The Department of the Interior has made a sad bungle of this Indian matter; its immense patronage has introduced corruption and almost criminal negligence, and thus Indian agencies as well as the Indians themselves have become demoralized. The new arrangement will make it possible to reduce the Indians to their proper position in relation to the Government; it will make coercion possible in so far as that may be necessary, and it will bring peace to our borders through the stern lessons of war—the only lessons which savages can appreciate.

Our illustration shows the method adopted in transferring Indian prisoners to their reservations. The old men and women and pappooses are tied to ponies, as represented in the cut, while the hardy young Indians perform the tedious journey through the snow on foot.

WRAITH-HAUNTED.

"YES, Helen?"

The speaker, a tall, elegant woman, in whose every lineament beauty yet lingered as if loth to accept from Time his seventy years' notice to quit, looked up interrogatively at her niece, a blooming matron, busy writing invitations for a juvenile party.

"I did not speak, aunt."

"Did you not? Nor you, Mr. Birley?"

Mr. Birley, engrossed in his evening paper, looked up somewhat vaguely.

"Eh, what?"

"Did you call me?"

"What, I? Certainly not."

"Strange!" murmured Mrs. Carson, involuntarily glancing at the ormolu time-piece ere her eyes bent down once more on her interrupted sewing. The fingers pointed to *ten minutes before nine.*

Click, click, went her needle steadily through the seam; Mrs. Birley's pen made a faint sound as it traced the pink paper; and Mr. Birley studied the "share-list" and "markets" with more than ordinary assiduity. A spaniel coiled up on the hearth dozed in a dog's paradise, in the glow of a ruddy fire, which lit up every corner of the crimson room, and was reflected cheerfully by glass, gilding, and polished furniture.

Presently Mrs. Carson's head was raised again.

"Well?" said she, glancing alternately from niece to nephew.

"What?" questioned both in a breath.

"One of you spoke this time—I heard my name distinctly."

"Indeed, Aunt Marianne, I have not uttered a syllable; I have not lifted my eyes from my desk since you addressed me last."

"Nor I from my newspaper, Mrs. Carson," continued the gentleman; "Dash is snoring most melodiously—possibly you mistook his utterance for mine. Not very complimentary if you did, I must say."

"Indeed I did *not*," returned she, with more emphasis than the occasion seemed to warrant. "I certainly heard myself called by my Christian name."

"Nonsense, aunt, I am sure no one spoke. You must be dreaming."

Again Mrs. Carson's eyes sought the time-piece on the mantle-shelf: the index had advanced five minutes.

"Maybe so; old people do dream sometimes," replied she, quietly, resuming her work with a sigh as if to dismiss the subject.

With a light laugh Mrs. Birley dipped her pen into the ink, and Mr. Birley sought his lost paragraph.

Had either husband or wife cared to listen there might have been heard a beating heart keeping time with the sharp click of the needle and the steady tick of the time-piece. But there was only one listener, and she, seemingly occupied with her needle-work, sat with lips apart and head bent in mute expectancy.

The hall-clock gave warning. With the first stroke of *nine* her work dropped; she grasped the arms of her chair and rose. Her face was blanched and rigid, her brown eyes were wild and wandering. For some moments she stood thus, then with a groan sank nerveless in her seat.

Her companions, alarmed, were by her side in an instant.

"My dear aunt, what is the matter?"

"Are you ill, Mrs. Carson?" and Mr. Birley as he spoke made a movement toward the bell.

The old lady, recovering, arrested his hand.

"Are you sure neither of you spoke to me?"

"Quite sure," was the simultaneous reply.

"Do you think any of the children called me?"

"Why, Aunt Marianne, what *are* you thinking of?—the children have been in bed two hours."

"Did neither of you hear any thing?"

"*I* heard nothing."

"Nor I, save the scratching of my own pen and the rustle of James's paper."

Mrs. Carson looked from one to the other as if incredulity struggled with a foregone conclusion; then in answer to their inquiries, said, seriously, "I distinctly heard my own name, 'Marianne,' called thrice, with an interval of five minutes between each call, although *I saw nothing!*"

"Saw nothing! Why, what did you expect to see?" asked Helen, much perplexed.

"Bosh!" muttered Mr. Birley between his teeth as he resumed his seat and study.

"*What* I expected to see is not easy to say; but I heard a voice I have not heard for thirty-five years. It is a solemn warning."

"Of what, aunt?"

"Of *death!*" was the low and measured response.

Mr. Birley laughed outright; his wife fidgeted, nervously.

"James," said the old lady, "I know you think me a superstitious old fool, and are laughing in your sleeve at my supernatural forebodings; but if you have patience to listen to an old woman's story first, I will then tell you what I believe is foreshadowed now—you can laugh afterward if so inclined."

Mr. Birley yawned and compared his watch with the clock; but there was a grave dignity in the speaker's manner which awed him into something like attention. His wife's curiosity was already aroused; she drew her chair to the fire, and with a gesture and grimace meant to call her spouse to order, said:

"Well, aunt, we are listening."

"Well, Helen, I suppose you know, if James does not, that when your grandfather Denton was in business he was for many years his own traveler; and as there were no railroads, few stage-coaches, and those only on main roads, he used to travel with a horse and gig. On one of his journeys he met at a road-side inn a Mr. Lavery, from Bristol, likewise traveling on his own account, although in a different line.

"The two had met before on the road, but on that occasion he found Mr. Lavery not only invalided, but crippled by rheumatism. The women of those days were of a different type from the present generation, and your grandmother was not only an excellent nurse, but possessed a valuable specific for rheumatism; so, being a man of impulse, without even a letter to announce his return—for a letter would have been longer on the road than himself—my father brought Mr. Lavery, wrapped up in blankets, to his own house, and placed him under my mother's care. For months the patient remained an invalid guest, tended by my mother, his wife being sent for after a while.

"Out of these services rendered and accepted grew a very warm friendship, one token of which was Mrs. Lavery's declared inability to dispense with the society of one or other of the Misses Denton. I, however, was the favorite, my visits generally extending over many months.

"I was about two-and-twenty when my last visit to Bristol was made, and—I may say so now without vanity—I was known as the beautiful Miss Denton; perhaps one reason why Mrs. Lavery was so proud to have me with her. Fond of dress and company herself, she was glad to have an attractive companion, and introduced me into much gayer society than my own mother had thought well for her daughters.

"I had been in Bristol nearly nine months, when the first of those peculiar occurrences which have marked my life stamped its indelible impress on my soul and memory.

"Mr. Lavery was away. Mrs. Lavery and myself had been to a card-party, which, as was customary in those days, broke up about ten o'clock. There had been music as well as cards, and I having then a very fine voice—"

"*Then!* You had a fine voice when I knew you first, twelve years ago," interrupted Mr. Birley.

"Well, James, perhaps so; but I *had* a good voice *then*, and naturally was pressed to exercise it. One of the guests, Mr. Carson, whom I saw that night for the first time, apparently had neither ears nor eyes for any one else; he seemed literally entranced by my singing, and whispered as much to me as he handed me to my sedan-chair when we left.

"Neither admiration nor adulation was new to me, yet at the one compliment of this young Scotchman I flushed with a strange pleasure such as no flattery had ever called up before. The words lingered in my ears all the while I was carried home; even his peculiar intonation had an unwonted fascination for me; and, indeed, when I retired to rest I found myself still dwelling upon those incidents of the evening in which the handsome Mr. Carson had the most prominent place. I am afraid I answered Mrs. Lavery's remarks somewhat at random, and went to bed with this stranger's parting words floating through my mind as I fell asleep.

"I mention this, my dears, merely to show that there was no possible link of connection between my thoughts and that which followed.

"The bed assigned to me was an old-fashioned four-post, with heavy moreen curtains and full valances, the curtains suspended from brass rings which ran upon iron rods. Mrs. Lavery, in her husband's absence, always slept with me.

"I had been asleep some time when I suddenly awakened with a start, hearing myself called. I sat up in the bed affrighted. The curtains at the foot were slowly undrawn, the rings jingling as they slipped over the iron rods, and there in the aperture, distinctly visible in the frosty moonlight, stood the form of *my mother* in her night-robes. She was thin and ghastly white; but a smile of ineffable sweetness parted her wan lips, from which issued slowly the words, 'Marianne, Marianne, Marianne!' Raising her hand as if in benediction, she melted away, as it were, into the moonbeams.

"Terror for the moment held me fast. When I recovered my self-possession I roused my bedfellow. She had seen nothing, heard nothing, and was therefore skeptical. In vain she strove, like you, to persuade me I had been dreaming; *the still open curtains refuted that*, for she recollected closing them with her own hand as she got into bed. She then suggested that the maid had played me a trick; but we found the door locked, with the key inside, as we had left it.

"'Oh, Mrs. Lavery!' I moaned, in an agony of apprehension, 'something is wrong at home—my mother is either ill or in trouble, perhaps dying, and wants me. Oh that I had never left her!'

"'Now do, my dear child, go to sleep; you have had the nightmare, that is all. It is not much more than a week since you heard from home; all was well then,' said Mrs. Lavery, trying to soothe my distress.

"'Oh, that was ten days ago!' I argued. 'It is a fortnight since the letter was written. What may not have happened since then! I must go home at once.'

"There was no response from my friend; sleep had overpowered her sympathy. Neither my terror nor distress had fully roused her.

"For me there was no more sleep that night. I sat up shivering in bed until the piercing cold compelled me to lie down. I watched the still open curtains and the retreating moonbeams as they marked on the wall the passage of the silent hours; but although my mother's pale face and languid voice haunted my memory, the actual presence came no more.

"Night shadows linger long in December, and I was afraid to rise until daylight, but the first streak of dawn found me astir collecting my scattered possessions; and by the time Mrs. Lavery got up I had almost completed my packing, for I had determined to go home, and knew that the 'Royal Mail' coach would start that very day for Manchester, and if I missed it I must wait three days for another.

"Mrs. Lavery's astonishment is not describable; the episode of the night had left no impression on her sleep-bound faculties. She tried raillery, banter, persuasion, to induce me to abandon a 'foolish whim, the offspring of a dream.'

"She changed her tone when the sluggish postman called out to the deaf servant, 'a letter for Miss Denton, and a shilling to pay!' in a voice which penetrated to the breakfast-table, and my trembling fingers almost refused to unclasp my purse or break the seal, which, however, was *not* black.

"Well I remember the tenor of that letter. It told that during my father's absence from home some rollicking fellow, with that in his head which was *not wit*, had knocked loudly at our door in the middle of the night, when all were asleep, and then run off. My mother, always a light sleeper, had started up under the impression that your grandfather had returned unexpectedly, and in her hurry to reach the door before he, in his irritable impatience, should knock a second time, caught her foot in the coverlet, and fell heavily against a carved oak coffer. There she was found in the morning with her collar-bone broken. The fracture was reduced, but she never fairly rallied, and I was summoned home, her symptoms being alarming.

"We were yet discussing these sad tidings when Mr. Carson was announced. He called, he said, not only to inquire after our health, but to offer his services in conveying either message or package to my friends in Manchester, whither he was then bound. (You need not smile, Helen; it was a common practice at that time to burden travelers with friendly letters and parcels, until their delivery at the journey's end became quite a tax.)

"'You have come quite opportunely, Mr. Carson,' Mrs. Lavery answered, briskly; 'you will relieve me from a sore dilemma. Miss Denton's mother having met with a severe injury, our young friend is summoned home hastily. She has never traveled alone in her life, and I was debating how I could trust her so far without a guardian. Will you undertake the charge? I know I can rely upon your care.'

"I saw a flush of pleasure light up his clear eye and handsome face as he answered earnestly, 'If Miss Denton will graciously accept my humble services I shall only be too proud of the trust.'

"In my eagerness to depart I had lost sight of the dangers and discomforts of the long journey to an unprotected girl; but the picture drawn by Mrs. Lavery to deter me from quitting Bristol, as she then thought, needlessly, had made the prospect something formidable. There was no disguising my satisfaction when a protector offered himself so unexpectedly; and if I thanked him quietly I know it was sufficiently.

"Mr. Carson's place had been booked the day before—outside. He hastened to the coach-office to secure an inside seat for me, and to transfer his own. A fruitless errand; every inside place was already secured. There only remained the hope that some male passenger would surrender his inside seat in favor of a lady.

"A vain hope. The 'insides' were all long-distance passengers, and to a man resented any infringement on the right of 'number one,' expressing their personal opinions more freely than courteously.

"'Mr. Carson,' I whispered, 'do not let there be any altercation on my account' (he was waxing warm). 'I should dread being penned up with those coarse men for two days; I would much rather sit outside with you.'

"An incautious speech, but the grateful look which answered it sent my blood tingling with very shame to my finger-ends. He answered, soberly, '*I* do prefer the outside in all seasons; but, then, I am hardy. You are not fitted to brave the inclemency of a midwinter frost. Only the urgency of life and death should tempt you to make the experiment.'

"'It *is* the urgency of life and death,' I answered. 'But I am not afraid of a little cold; my pelisse is warm, and my fur tippet protects my chest.'

"I bade my weeping friend 'good-by.' Without another word Mr. Carson assisted me to mount the movable ladder to a seat at the back, which held two, and fronted the guard's solitary post. Just then a messenger, dispatched by Mrs. Lavery, came up laden with a rug and shawl.

"With much care, Mr. Carson placed the rug beneath my feet, and adjusted the shawl around my knees. I felt at once that I was in good hands, though, in my ignorance, I considered the precaution unnecessary.

"The leaders' heads were released, the coachman cracked his long whip, the guard blew his horn, a final 'adieu' was said, and I had started on the most momentous journey of my life.

"Rightly judging that my emotions were not less deep because they did no more than well up into my eyes, my new protector entered into a conversation with the guard to divert his attention, and left me to my meditations. Sombre enough they were. I could not quit my kind friend without regret; but what weighed heaviest on my heart was the presentiment that my mother was *dead*, and that I had seen her *passing spirit.* More sorrowful and gloomy became my thoughts as one by one the mile-stones were left behind on the turnpike-road, and, notwithstanding my wrappings, I began to feel a little chilly.

"I need not weary you with the details of that long and miserable journey, only rendered endurable by the unremitting attention of my protector, for such in truth he was. Not only the scenery, but the weather and temperature varied with the districts through which we rode. From hard, black frost we passed to a region where snow lay thick on the distant hills, like a shroud on a dead giant, and in light patches here and there by the road-side, or on the trees which tossed their skeleton arms in the breeze and played at snow-ball with us as the coach swept past. From falling snow we made an advance under a canopy of weeping clouds—first a drizzle, then rain—soaking, persistent, pitiless rain—rain without intermission—rain which would have penetrated a plank.

"No wonder, then, that notwithstanding the plaid which Mr. Carson had stripped from himself to fold round me during the chill of the first evening (using as a substitute, when too late, a horse-rug obtained from an hostler at a fabulous price)—no wonder, I say, that several hours before we reached our destination I was drenched to the skin and utterly worn out both in body and mind.

"When the steaming horses drew the miry coach up before the Bridgewater Arms I had lain for some time in a state of insensibility on Mr. Carson's shoulder, utterly unconscious of his supporting arm, or of the anathemas vented by the sympathizing guard on the stolid 'insides,' whose victim he clearly considered me to be.

"Uncle Bancroft was fortunately in waiting, for I had to be lifted from the coach-top, and my generous friend was himself too cramped and benumbed to render further assistance. Brandy was poured down my throat, and as soon as a hackney-coach could be found I was conveyed, not to my father's house, but to my uncle's, Mr. Carson never leaving me until I was safe under the roof of my friends and showed some signs of returning animation.

"My shoes, stockings, and upper garments, sodden and saturated, had to be cut from my swollen limbs; but of this I knew nothing, for a fever had supervened and blotted out every thing.

"Evasive answers were given to my first inquiries for my mother, as I was too weak to bear the truth; but when I approached convalescence I was told every thing. *She was dead when I commenced my journey—had died on the 23d of December, close upon midnight.* Her last inquiry had been *for me.* Glancing feebly around from one weeping relative to another, she had said: *'All here? All! all except Marianne. Marianne, Marianne, Marianne!'*

"Helen, there could be no question that my mother's parting spirit had visited my bedside. The impression made was thenceforth ineffaceable."

"The coincidence was certainly remarkable," said Mr. Birley; "still, I incline to think the whole a dream."

"There was something very awful about it, even if it was a dream, you must own that, James," put in his wife.

"It was *no* dream; but my next revelation took place in broad daylight—*that* could be no dream," said Mrs. Carson, sadly. "I have called my journey momentous, and justly. It influenced my life. My friend, in his care for me, had sacrificed himself. Hardy as he was, inflammation laid its hot hand upon his chest, held him down, and only let him rise with a spot marked like a target for the shaft of death. Gratitude and pity rose to heart and lips when I first saw his altered face. That journey had indeed fused two souls into one. Whatever impressions our first meeting had made my sufferings and his self-sacrifice had confirmed. What I had found him during our long and miserable ride I found him ever, and loved him as such large-hearted, self-denying men should be loved. There was no talk of marriage between us for at least eighteen months; but there was no doubt whither we were drifting. Every moment he could spare from business was spent with me; and I think it was principally on my account that he induced his uncle in Glasgow, a muslin manufacturer, to engage a traveler and give him a permanent agency in Manchester, opening a warehouse for the sale of their goods.

"Shortly after that I became his wife, with

the full approbation of friends, and with every prospect of happiness. He had furnished for me, simply but well, a house in Hanover Street, then a thorough Scotch colony, and my father's house being in Cannon Street, I was not more than a quarter of a mile from home. As was then the cus m, we were married on Sunday, it being likewise my birthday, the 21st of December, and at once took possession of our new abode.

"The twenty-third was signaled by one of the fiercest conflagrations Manchester had known for years. A cotton-mill at Ancoats had taken fire while the hands were being dismissed. Some were in the upper stories at the time; the narrow staircase was crowded, and many lives were in danger. Attracted by the glare, Mr. Carson was quickly on the spot, forgetful of all but the duty before him, and to his heroic efforts three girls at least owed their lives. They came to thank him a week later. Alas! where was he? His hair was singed, and so was his coat, from which the tails were dangling loose; he had been wetted through alike with perspiration and water from the engine, but he waited until all danger to others was over, and when he reached home his clothes were apparently dry. He kissed me, apologized for keeping me waiting tea, and sat down to describe the incidents of the fire. Of his own exploits he said little; but on the plea of fatigue excused his sitting down to tea in the plight he then was. After the meal he dozed off, which I attributed to his recent exertions and the heat of our own fire. It was only on going to rouse him that I discovered his clothes had been wetted, and I was too inexperienced to calculate the consequences.

"The following day I had promised to spend with my father and sisters. William was to join me on closing the warehouse. Being a bride I was of course an object of special attention, made more of by my relations than at any other period of my life. I found there a perfect levee of aunts and cousins discussing the bride's cake and future prospects with equal freedom. In the midst of our lively chat time fled fast. There came a sharp rat-tat-tat at the street-door.

"'Why, that is William's knock; what brings him from the warehouse so early?' exclaimed I, running to anticipate the servant in opening the door. Without another word than 'Marianne,' strangely spoken, he passed me by, never stopping to kiss me, as was his wont.

"I confess he had spoiled me. I pouted, petulant tears welled to my eyes, and I lingered with the fastening of the door before I turned round.

"'Marianne!'

"He was calling me from behind. I dropped the latch and followed him, as I thought, into the room I had just quitted.

"'Where is William?' I asked, looking round but not seeing him.

"'He has not come in here.'

"'Marianne!'

"The voice seemed to come from the room on the opposite side the hall. I ran thither, anticipating the loving embrace he was too reserved to give before strangers.

"*He was not there.*

"'William, dear, where are you? Don't hide from me!'

"There was no answer. I ran into the back-parlors, up stairs, down stairs, calling his name. *He was nowhere to be seen.*

"By this time the house was in commotion. Sisters and cousins alike had heard the knock, but no one had seen my husband or heard his voice.

"As they looked from me to one another for an explanation of that which is inexplicable, I having protested that Mr. Carson had passed and spoken to me in the hall, a sudden light flashed over and appalled me. I remembered *seeing the hall-paneling through his figure!* With a startling shriek I rushed bareheaded from the house, tore across Cannon Street, along Sugar Lane, and up Shude Hill like a mad-woman, nor paused till my grasp was on the handle of my own door.

"That was ajar. A bad omen. I found my beloved husband extended on our bed, a doctor by his side vainly trying to bleed him—*the blood would not flow.*

"Inflammation—the result, no doubt, of his overnight's wetting and fatigue—had seized him suddenly.

"On his way home he had called on his doctor, who never left him again in life.

"Before night fell on the earth, the night of Death had fallen on my idolized husband, and my soul was in eclipse.

"Maid, wife, widow in a week, a widow all unconscious of her widowhood. A dumb, dreamy statuesque automaton. I lived and moved, but that was all.

"I was taken home. When the funeral was over, the house in Hanover Street was given up. I was incapable of managing it.

"In this state I remained until my boy was born. Then the ice at my heart thawed, and tears came to my relief. The babe lived and I lived for him.

"How I idolized that boy! I watched him night and day with more than a mother's care. He grew up a fine strong youth, the image of his dead father, whose name he bore. His father's uncle would have taken the entire charge of him, but I would not part from Willie; so we were summoned to Glasgow together, and there lived until the death of old Mr. Carson, when Willie was sixteen. The old gentleman left considerable property behind him, much of which was bequeathed to my son.

"Having no ties in Scotland, I came back to the old home, from which two of my sisters had gone away to homes of their own.

"Between myself and his grandfather Willie stood a fair chance of being spoiled. He grew a tall athletic man, not over-fond of business or study, but much given to all manly sports and pastimes; in which he was encouraged by his grandfather. As for me, I saw no harm in his pursuits, and never dreamed of danger.

"Willie had a friend close by with whom he often put on the gloves, or practiced fencing and single-stick.

"One day, toward the close of the year—my sorrows have always come in the midst of others' rejoicing—I sat reading by the fire; my father was playing his favorite game of backgammon with my sister Sarah; you, then a child of three years, sat nursing a kitten at your mother's feet; she had brought you to spend Christmas with us.

"My father, I must tell you, had then given up business, and our garret was filled with old lumber from the warehouse, several open baskets or 'wiskets' containing waste 'cops,' 'spindles,' and other refuse among the rest.

"Our quiet was broken, and the rattling dice drowned by a loud clash and clatter up stairs.

"'Some one has left that garret-window open again, and the cats are making fine havoc with those cops, I know; hark how they rattle!'

"'Go up stairs, Sally, and shut the window,' said my father, pausing in his game.

"Sarah went. All was still.

"'The window is fast enough, and I saw no cats,' said she, as she sat down again to the board.

"Again the clash and clatter, as of metal, clear and distinct.

"'Helen, do you go up. Take my stick, and rout the intruders out; I'd swear the cats are there.'

"Your mother went, and came back with the same report—nothing there; all silent.

"Again the self-same clash and clatter, louder than before. I, haunted by old memories, felt my heart sink.

"'Here, Marianne, lass, lend me thy arm; thou and I'll go up and see what all this din's about; but don't thou look so scared.'

"We mounted the first flight, he leaning on my arm. All at once the clatter ceased.

"'Mother, mother, mother!' came floating like a breath down the stairway; and while we paused to listen—for my father heard it also—the figure of Willie brushed past us, with one hand pressed upon his heart.

"I trembled and grew faint. *I had seen the balustrades through the form.*

"My father chuckled outright. 'Ah, the young dog, so it was Willie playing tricks upon us, after all.'

"I said nothing until I reached the parlor. As I rightly conjectured, no Willie was there.

"'Father,' said I, clasping my hands in anguish, 'that was not Willie, it was his wraith. I have been *wraith-haunted* all my life.'

"My father looked dazed. My sisters, perhaps with a good motive, rallied me on my Scottish superstition, much as you have done; but ere their laughter had well subsided, there was an imperative knock at the street-door.

"We were summoned to our neighbor, Mr. Neale's; an accident had befallen my son.

"He lay on a couch pale and bleeding, wounded in the chest, the room in disorder, foils upon the floor. He had barely strength left to press my hand and say, 'Mother, do not weep; Tom could not help it—the button came off his foil. Mother, forgive—' and I was childless.

"I was spared all the agony of the inquest, for there was another long blank in my memory; and during my mental oblivion your grandfather died, borne down by the double sorrow.

"You see, I have good reasons for saying I am wraith-haunted, and for knowing that the voice I heard to-night is a call from the spirit-world to me."

Mr. Birley and his wife both looked perplexed and serious.

"I do remember something about a ghost in grandfather's garret when I was a very little girl. But how is it I was never told of the 'warnings' you think you have had?"

"They were hushed up lest my grief should be reawakened. And now let us go to bed—it is late. The issues of life and death are in higher hands than ours."

The morning broke—clear, sparkling, exhilarating. Mrs. Carson made her appearance in her ordinary health, a little paler, it might be, but that was all.

Mrs. Birley had hesitated whether to issue her invitations, but finally resolved not to disappoint the children, and so they were sent.

The nursery-doors were thrown open, and all hands, big and little, summoned to the task of decoration with evergreens and holly.

In the midst of it all a carrier brought a large box inscribed, "Aunt Carson's Gift." The old lady had made her purchases the day before. There was a general rush to wrench open the lid, and make a raid on the contents. Books, dolls, work-boxes, a desk, toys noisy and noiseless, were there, each labeled with the fortunate recipient's name. Flushed and elated, the youngsters rushed hither and thither displaying their prizes. Frocks and pinafores filled to repletion dropped their contents, until the little ones might be tracked by straggling Shems and Noahs, cups and saucers, whistles and drum-sticks.

The box had been removed, the litter cleared away, the stray waifs collected, when Mrs. Carson descended the stairs after her customary nap. A wee round toy, the color of the stair-carpet, had been overlooked. She stepped upon it, and fell from top to bottom, striking her head against the balustrades.

There was a rush through the house to where she lay stunned on the oil-cloth. Reverently and sadly she was carried into the nearest room—the one occupied overnight. A messenger was sent on horseback for a surgeon and for Mr. Birley.

Shocked beyond measure, the latter gentleman hastened home in time to hear the fiat pronounced:

"An injured spine—concussion of the brain—no hope whatever."

A physician summoned hastily confirmed the surgeon's decision.

The weeping children were huddled from the room.

"How long may she linger?" was Mr. Birley's question.

"She may go off any moment, the shock to her system is so great; she *may* last two or three hours."

"Do you think she is conscious?"

"I am afraid not."

Mrs. Birley, sobbing, whispered her husband, "James, do you think aunt did hear any thing supernatural last night?"

Two days before he would have said, "All bosh!" now he answered, "God only knows! It is most mysterious."

"If she did, she will not die until nine o'clock."

"At nine!" murmured the dying woman; "at nine."

She was evidently conscious, and something more she said, but the words were inaudible. Husband and wife watched the clock as intensely as Mrs. Carson had watched it the night before.

Ten minutes to nine! The retreating pulse quickened under the doctor's touch. The lips moved.

"William!" was faintly audible to the bent ear.

Five minutes to nine! The "change" was perceptible.

"Yes, William!"

There was another pause—a burr—the clock's note of warning. There was a rattle in the throat of the dying woman.

"Coming, William!" was gasped out audibly.

Nine!

A last leap of the pulse—a last flicker of the eyelids—the "call" was obeyed.

Mrs. Carson, wraith-haunted, spirit-summoned, was of the dead!

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The poultry for sale here comes chiefly from Bucks County, Pennsylvania; later in the season the turkeys are sent frozen from Vermont. The receipts by shipment from all parts of the country amount on an average to about four tons per day. But before Thanksgiving and Christmas it is increased to about six tons. The proprietors of this stall are the largest dealers in this country, and they occasionally make shipments to Europe.

HUMORS OF THE DAY.

Gent. "Confound the hair-oil; how it sticks!"

Wife. "Oh, Harry! that is not the hair-oil; it must be the baby's soothing sirup."

LATEST CITY INTELLIGENCE.

Money is quiet—that is to say, we can't get hold of any of it.

Provisions are down, as they should be.

There is a great rise in balloons, as usual.

Game is high.

Accommodation is very bad.

Stocks exhibited a better tendency, nobody being confined in them.

There were no gold operations at the bank, at least not with us.

"You seem to walk more erect than usual, my dear Sir."

"Yes, I have been straightened by circumstances."

A Liberal Measure—Three pints to a quart.

R. JOHNSON SHAKING HANDS WITH AN ENGLISH BOOT-BLACK.

Boot-Black.—"Black yer Boots? Shine 'em up!"

R. Johnson.—"May that feeling of amity and good-will which now exists between our two great countries never be disturbed. Allow me to shake hands!"

Spriggins is a little forgetful sometimes. He counted his brood the other night, but could only make fourteen. "How is this?" he asked his wife. "I thought there were fifteen of them at the last census?"

"So there were," answered the wife; "but little Sammy was drowned since then."

"Indeed!" said Spriggins, meditatively; "why, it seems to me I heard of that at the time."

A transcendental preacher took for his text, "Feed my lambs." A plain farmer very quaintly remarked to him, on coming out of the church: "A very good text, Sir; but you should take care not to put the hay so high in the rack that the lambs can't reach it!"

Why is a clever school-boy like a detective?—Because he's quick at *apprehension.*

The Sunday Question.—"How did you like the sermon, dear?"

During a season of great religious declension an aged deacon was asked whether the church to which he belonged were united. "Ah, yes," replied the good man, with emotion, "for we are all *frozen together!*"

"What does a man think of when he thinks of nothing?" said a young lady to a gentleman with whom she had broken an engagement. "He thinks, miss, of a woman's promise."

Little Child. "Mamma, isn't Mr. Biffles very strong?"

Mamma. "Why?"

Little Child. "Because he said he was going to take the ferry-boat over to Brooklyn."

"Mamma," exclaimed a beautiful girl, who had suffered affectation to obscure the little intellect she possessed, "what is that long green thing lying on the dish before you?"

"A cucumber, my beloved Georgiana," replied the mamma, with a bland smile of approbation on her darling's commendable curiosity.

"A cucumber! Gracious goodness, my dear mamma, how very extraordinary! I always imagined, until this moment, that they grew in slices!"

"What do you drive such a pitiful-looking carcass as that for? Why don't you put a good, heavy coat of flesh on 'im?" asked a friend of an Irish cartman about his horse.

"A heavy coat of flesh, mavourneen! Be all the blessed powers, now, when the poor crature can scarce carry the little flesh there is on 'im."

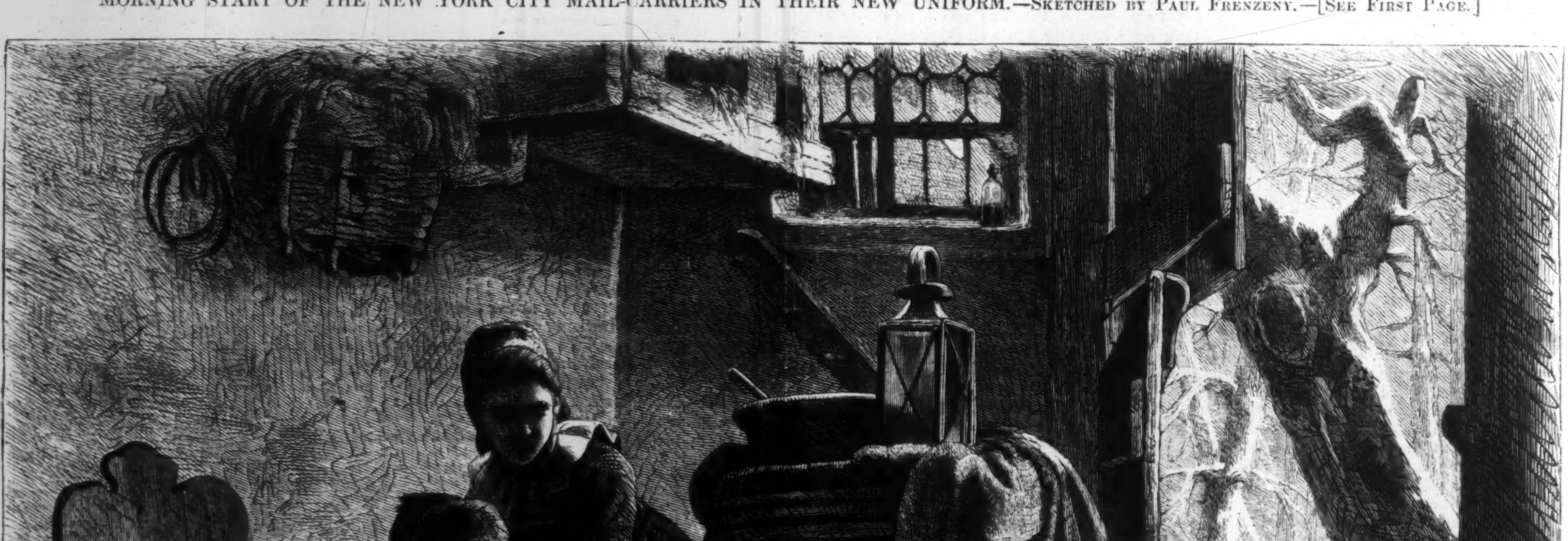
R. JOHNSON GETTING OUT OF A LONDON CAB.

London Cabby.—"Arf-a-crown, yer Honor."

R. Johnson.—"My dear Sir, allow me to shake hands."

London Cabby.—"Oh, that's played out! I shook 'ands with yer when yer got in!"

MORNING START OF THE NEW YORK CITY MAIL-CARRIERS IN THEIR NEW UNIFORM.—SKETCHED BY PAUL FRENZENY.—[SEE FIRST PAGE.]



THE YOUNG TRAPPERS.

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.—[SKETCHED BY THOMAS WORTH.]

THE GAME STALL, FULTON MARKET, NEW YORK CITY.—SKETCHED BY THEODORE R. DAVIS.—[SEE PAGE 827.]

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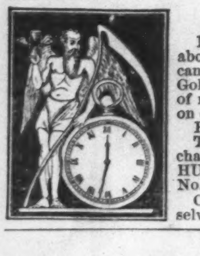

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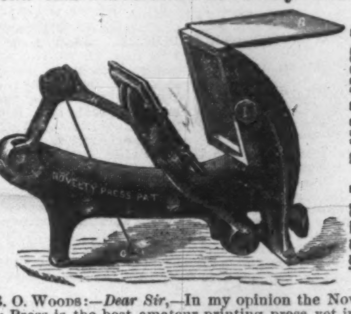

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